

# child study

A quarterly journal of parent education

Summer 1955

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# The impact on parents of children's growth phases

Since the turn of the century, psychologists and educators have studied the ways in which parents' attitudes affect their children's growth and personality. This has been a useful quest, enlarging our knowledge and perception of the complex interplay of personal, social and biological forces.

Yet it has had some unfortunate by-products. The emphasis on the importance for the child of everything that parents feel and do has often seemed to demand an unreasonable perfection from parents. And there has been a tendency to stress mistakes rather than the many discerning ways in which most fathers and mothers meet the challenges of parenthood.

In spite of our understanding that neither child nor parent can be viewed alone, we have too often acted as if this relationship were a one-way process. Plainly, the growth phases through which children pass affect parents in different ways. One parent reacts sharply to a kind of behavior that another easily accepts. Each father and mother may feel and act quite differently toward the same child as he grows and changes, and differently also toward each of their several children.

Knowing more what to expect from children—as they pass from the dependence of early childhood through the seeming aloofness of the school years and adolescence to the passionate assertion of their young adulthood—has been one of the gains of recent study and research. But what shall parents expect of themselves? What are they to do when, under stress, they give way to anxiety and irritation? Or when their children's needs conflict with their own?

A fresh approach to questions such as these should bring added strength and insight to parents. It is time once again to broaden our inquiry and to focus attention specifically on *how children affect parents*.

*Program statement of the CSAA Annual  
Conference, March 28, 1955*



*The following seven articles are the papers given at the 1955 Annual Conference of the Child Study Association of America in New York in March.\**

*Intensive study of one element in family life or parent-child relationships, while useful and necessary, often makes it hard to see the picture whole. The various points of view here represented—the economic and cultural as well as the psychological and personal—should offer a helpful perspective, and one in which the parent's reactions, in addition to his "role," are examined.*

# The first eighteen months of life

By Sibylle K. Escalona

What the baby accomplishes in his first year and a half—and his toughness in overcoming mishaps—should amaze and reassure his parents

It is impossible to trace the complex series of events which constitute growth during a baby's life in one paper, much less to discuss what the astounding phenomenon of development means for the adults in charge of the child and the problems it may raise for them. So here I shall try only to examine in some detail a few of the aspects of experience during babyhood which are seldom mentioned but which are important for both children and parents.

There are two things about having a baby which I believe to be universal. One of them is that, at least for families living in our Western civilization and at the present time (and probably for most people in most ages), neither the anticipation nor the reality of having a baby is an unmixed blessing. Some uneasiness—apprehension and even fearfulness—and genuine concern

necessarily arise in both parents, not only in connection with the first baby, but with each addition to the family. There will be as many different responses to pregnancy and to a new member of the household as there are individuals involved; and while certain reactions are common to most, the form in which they are expressed will vary with each person.

The major sources of difficulty, however, seem to me to be of two sorts. One source of apprehension I would like to call realistic and to a degree objective. If I see a woman who is about to give birth to a child—or, for that matter, her husband—who is full of nothing but joyous expectation and cheerful confidence every minute of the time, I become a bit suspicious. It is a plain fact that children complicate existence. For the great majority of mankind there is a realistic burden to be faced in terms of finances and comfort and safety. Children have to be fed, clothed, schooled, and cared for when they fall ill, and the

\* The papers have been slightly condensed and edited for publication in this issue of CHILD STUDY.

parent of limited or moderate means who never stops to think "here goes the new winter coat I meant to buy," or "what would happen to us if I lost my job?" just isn't seeing straight. Contrary to the oversimplified statements we occasionally read or hear, there is ample clinical evidence to show that awareness of these real hardships and sacrifice does not in itself indicate rejection or lack of parental love.

On a less concrete but just as real level, the great majority of thoughtful parents are also prey to at least occasional awe and apprehension at bringing a child into the complicated and in many ways painful sort of life we lead. It is possible to worry over-much about H-bombs and the seemingly inevitable violence and indignity that exist in the relationships between people. But one would have to shut one's eyes very tightly indeed to contemplate creating a new life without worrying about the dangers and uncertainties and the pain that are surely ahead.

#### ***Heightened reactions in pregnancy***

The other source of what I regard as an inevitable disturbance is more biological, and may vary from causing a mild upset to one that is quite severe. I refer to the fact that, for the woman, pregnancy and delivery are major physiological events involving changes within the body not only in sensations, but in body chemistry as well. At such times of biological instability we have learned to expect that the intensity of the person's reactions will be considerably heightened. Sometimes fears come more easily, minor hurts and resentments are felt more sharply and irritability explodes more readily than usual; at other moments joyous excitement, sympathy and even affection are somehow more keenly felt. As a result of such extra demands on one's available energy, even the lassitude and lack of zest for things which overcome a good many women during some stages of their pregnancy is part of the same picture. As long as these more negative aspects of the experience are proportionate,

and there is still plenty of room for joy and for constructive planning as well as for worry and discomfort, the mere fact that parents have some natural qualms about the coming baby is not a signal that something is wrong with their emotional attitudes. On the contrary, being able to take the good without having to deny the bad is part and parcel of being a mature, responsible person.

#### ***Doing what you're made for***

The second universal fact about having a baby is that, with the exception of persons quite seriously ill or in desperate circumstances (and often even among such individuals), it is apparently impossible to bring a child into the world without pleasure. I tend to think that this is at least as much a biological phenomenon as a social one. People are so made as to be capable of conceiving, bearing and delivering children and it appears to be a fundamental principle of living matter that doing what you were made for is satisfying and pleasurable.

It is a strange fact that, in our culture at least, there is a fair proportion of people who find it easier to express anxiety or negative feelings openly than to admit that they are looking forward to something or having pleasure. I mention this because it is my experience, and that of a great many other people, that if you come to know a woman who at first shocks and grieves you because she seems almost entirely dispirited and negative about having her baby, you almost always find out that she is showing you only a part of what she really feels and thinks.

Actually, it appears that there *are no rejecting mothers* if that word is intended to mean that both unconsciously and consciously pregnancy and the arrival of the new baby have an exclusively negative meaning for the woman. It is unfortunately true that there are people so harassed by pain and conflict within and without that a great proportion of their behavior and of their conscious feeling reflects pain



and resentment. Even such people, I submit, have it in them, so to speak, to give expression to more positive feelings if someone or something intervenes to ease the pressure.

**Babies are sturdy organisms**

A great deal has been written and said about the fact that what happens during the first weeks, and even days, of life carries a considerable impact upon how the little creature will adapt to life "on the outside." To my way of thinking this is not so much because the tiny baby is extraordinarily vulnerable and impressionable, although to some extent such is the case, as because the first few weeks of the mother's and the family's experience with the baby often set the tone and establish the emotional climate which will color the relationship for a long time to come.

We tend to think of newborn and young babies as extremely tender, helpless and totally dependent beings. In one sense this is true. But what many people do not realize is that given adequate elementary care, babies are sturdy, tough, young organisms better equipped to adapt and to make their wants known than we usually give them credit for.

Of course, a baby would starve if not fed and freeze if exposed. But under ordinary circumstances he is not likely to starve, because when hungry he will first whimper and then scream, and it is not chance, but one of nature's arrangements, that mothers really cannot bear to hear their babies cry for any length of time without doing something about it. Also it is true that babies, like older persons, have built into their bodies the machinery for temperature regulation. Very careful investigations have shown that even four- and five-day-old babies do almost as well as we do in maintaining a relatively constant body temperature under conditions which change within the normal range. Here we have another example of the fact that babies are not released from the protection of the womb until they are biologically quite competent

to exist under the ordinary circumstances of human life.

Something very similar is true, in my judgment at least, about those portions of the baby's experience which later become his emotional life and determine to a large extent his relationships with other people. To the best of our knowledge, tiny babies up to about a month old live in a sort of twilight world in which only the sensations or experiences of the moment are real. At this particular time, what went before has no existence at all, and the baby has no capacity to imagine that things will ever be different. For us this state of being is unimaginable. Even when we do not think about it consciously at all, everything we experience is sensed in the context of other kinds of situations and feelings which have gone before, and in the knowledge that nothing endures forever.

The closest I can come to suggesting the baby's reactions is that perhaps they are a

THE ANNUAL MEETING  
of the  
CHILD STUDY ASS'N OF AMERICA  
will be held at 3:45  
on the afternoon of  
Tuesday, June 14  
at the  
FRENCH INSTITUTE AUDITORIUM  
22 East 60th Street  
New York City

Following a brief business meeting and the Director's report, there will be a symposium on *Desegregation: The Family's Role in a Period of Transition*. Speakers will be Marie Jahoda, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, New York University; Margaret M. Lawrence, M.D., psychiatrist; and Robert B. Johnson, Ph.D., Sociologist, Russell Sage Foundation. Galen R. Weaver, Secretary for Religion and Race, Congregational-Christian Churches, U.S.A., will preside.



little bit like those we might experience out of doors on a day of alternate cloud and sunshine. Now the sun shines hot upon us, and now it goes away leaving us slightly cool, now breezes chill us and all of a sudden we are enveloped in the warmth of sunlight again. The succession of being comfortable and being uncomfortable, being tense and being relaxed, crying and being contentedly quiescent, being left alone and being handled which makes up the baby's life has some of this quality.

#### ***All's well that ends well***

The important thing is that once the moment of hunger or other distress is over, it is gone altogether, as far as the baby is concerned. To be sure, the vague image of the world and of other people which gradually develops within the child does depend upon whether or not by and large his experiences are comforting and pleasant. But for the very tiny baby I choose to emphasize the importance of the good old principle, "all's well that ends well." Too often parents of a tiny baby are more worried than is at all necessary if for a while they have trouble feeding the baby, or if he cries from colicky pain, brings up his food with the burp, etc. Such failures in functioning are hard enough to take just because one feels so helpless to make the baby comfortable, without adding a further worry concerning the consequences for his future emotional life.

It is perfectly true that unhappy babyhood only too often precedes some degree of personality disturbance in childhood and in later life. But it does not follow from this well known fact that the intermittent distress in early babyhood necessarily *causes* the later difficulty. It is more probable that such conditions as the parents' temperament or the family's way of living which caused early disturbances, are also contributing factors where later difficulties occur. True, we rarely hear about children who experienced serious disturbances in early infancy and yet turned out to be fine afterwards. But this may be more be-

cause parents tend to forget a condition once it has been corrected than because things never happen that way.

In a study of normal, healthy, well-functioning children with which I am connected, we were enormously impressed with the fact that many children who are developing in an extremely healthy manner at the age of five and six, actually have gone through many of those difficulties generally associated with the "case histories" of emotionally disturbed children. This applies not only to such things as colic or feeding and sleep difficulties in early infancy, but even to later crises over weaning, toilet training and the like.

#### ***Not what, but how***

I should like to make sure that I will not be misunderstood on this point. Everything we know about the development of children and about the history of emotional difficulties shows without a doubt that overly harsh weaning or toilet training or any of the other difficult moments of infancy or early childhood can, and often do, precede maladjustments later on. But now that experts in child development have finally gotten around to studying healthy children with as much care and attention as has been given to emotionally disturbed children, we are learning that it is not necessarily these specific events that are the root of the matter. What they meant at the time to the people concerned and how they are ultimately resolved—or left unresolved—is what really matters.

I have chosen to dwell on this topic because many parents are burdened by a sense of quite terrifying responsibility and feelings of guilt when difficulties develop around some point in the child's emotional growth. Sometimes mothers seem to believe that trouble with colic or weaning or some such thing will cause irreversible damage and that the child will thereafter be in danger of becoming what is known as a problem child forever more.

Although there is a good deal more for us to learn in this area, the information now



on hand is sufficient to convince me and many others that things are neither so bad nor so simple as that. What is bad, and serious, is the effect which the extra worry and guilt of well-intentioned, loving parents may have upon the emotional atmosphere within the family. It is this tension which makes it difficult or impossible to maintain the comfortable, relaxed and reasonably confident atmosphere of family living which is the best, and perhaps the only, way of helping the child to live through such minor crises without being scarred. Anxiety, it seems to me, often sets up a vicious circle in which the parents' distrust of their own ability and worth is in subtle ways mixed up with a lack of confidence in the child's powers of growth and adjustment, not infrequently leading to the very evils which were unnecessarily feared to begin with.

#### ***The later stages of babyhood***

I am now going to jump to a consideration of the significance of a much later developmental stage and the problems this stage frequently raises for parents. I am referring to what to me is perhaps the most fascinating transition point between "real" infancy and the later phases of babyhood—a change which starts somewhere around eight or nine months and ends at eighteen months or somewhat later.

By the time the child is eight or nine months old or thereabouts, he knows a good deal about his own body and what he can do with it, he is pretty familiar with his own immediate environment, recognizing people and things, and knowing what to expect by and large in relation to tables and chairs and rattles and cookies and mothers and baby buggies and eating utensils and an infinite series of things and activities.

A great many of his actions have become purposive. He knows that he wants to get from one corner of the room to the other and is capable of getting there by creeping; he knows he wants to get out of the playpen and when he cries angrily it is not just

a blind immediate reaction to a feeling of displeasure, but purposeful screaming to get someone to come and take him out. He knows moods of gaiety and delight, he knows disappointment and anger, he can tell by looking at his mother's face or listening to her voice whether she feels indulgent and playful or whether she means business. Comparatively speaking, life has become very complicated, but also richly varied and exciting.

#### ***The triumph of achievement***

This is the time when, typically, children begin to take positive pleasure in overcoming obstacles. I do not know how many of you have been lucky enough to observe a baby at the moment when he first learned to pull himself to a standing position, or first took a few steps by himself without fear of falling, or first learned to hold the cup by himself while drinking. When he finally achieves his aim, after endless trials, he is apt to look about with a truly radiant expression of triumph and expansive delight.

Delightful as all of this sounds and is, parents very commonly find caring for the youngster during this developmental period exceptionally difficult. The happy idyll of early infancy is replaced by a tumultuous relationship which can produce such irritation and bafflement in the adult as to seriously interfere with a mutually gratifying relationship. It is no longer a simple matter for the adult to know just what the child wants or what is distressing him, or how to divert and console him. In part these difficulties develop because this particular phase is less talked about than early infancy or the pre-school period so that parents find it difficult to understand what is happening. This is the period during which, to use the language of Erik Erikson, children are faced with the developmental task of achieving a sense of autonomy—of learning that there is such a thing as the self separated from all the surroundings about, and discovering that one can use one's own body at will in a way quite dif-



ferent from that used to move or alter other objects or bodies.

#### **Testing his powers**

Having discovered that there is such a thing as the self and that it can be put to use, the next developmental step is to find out the limits of one's strength and powers. The youngster who cries when you lift him to the very place he tried so hard to reach is distressed because what really matters to him is the struggle to do it for himself. In many other ways, a child during this period is often disgruntled if one anticipates his wishes. Though he strains and strains trying to climb up the sofa, when you put him there he tries to get down. He tugs at the icebox door, but when you open it for him he loses all interest. He pushes and pushes at the peg board on wheels or a little stool trying to move it along the floor, but when you adjust it for him or guide it in the direction he means to go, he becomes angry.

#### **He wants to do it himself**

Since he wants to find out for himself just what he can and cannot accomplish, the toddler is often a nuisance in any well-ordered home and will persist in doing things which his facial expression shows he knows perfectly well he is not supposed to do. Ashtrays, electric cords, stoves, ice boxes, table cloths, stairs, doors, gates, sister's braids and father's glasses—all are grist for the mill of this young person.

Just as this age period provides, in healthy children, perhaps the purest and keenest joy in mastery ever experienced, so does it bring bitter disappointment and violent rage. The child is not baby enough to have everything done for him, but enough of a baby still to have relatively little judgment about the actual limits of his strength. You have all seen toddlers try to do something either altogether impossible or way beyond their ability. One reason parents find it difficult to exert the patience and tact required by the toddler is that his outbursts of anger and grief seem so completely un-

reasonable. Sometimes he does not even particularly want the thing he is after. It is hard for the adult to see that it is just as bitter a disappointment for this child not to be able to do something with *his own* strength as it would be for an older one not to get some object that he badly wanted.

#### **Our bewildering rules**

When you stop to think about it, the number and kinds of limits that have to be learned are so large it is no wonder that the toddler becomes confused. It is not only his own strength and agility that sets limits, and not only the nature of the physical world about him. At least as important are the limits which mothers, fathers and everybody else continually set for children and necessarily have to maintain. You have to learn that it is all right to splash the bath water, but not the soup; that balls can be thrown in the yard, but not in the living room; that teddy bear's nose and ears can be pulled at will, but people will object to this treatment; that the very act which earns you high praise on the toilet arouses no enthusiasm when it happens elsewhere; that most of the time it is all

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### **New research project in parent education**

Under a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation, the Child Study Association of America has appointed Dr. Orville G. Brim, Jr. (presently at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Wisconsin) to conduct a three-year study of the relationship between social science and parent education. Dr. Brim will have the assistance of an advisory committee of social scientists and practitioners. In conjunction with the project, he will conduct a seminar on research in parent education in the Sociology Department of the Graduate School of Arts and Science, New York University.



right to shout and bang toys, but when there is company or mother takes a nap you are supposed to be quiet, etc. In learning all this, the stormy contests with both animate and inanimate objects which characterize the toddler stage are necessary and desirable, just as the hours of looking at the movements of his own hands, or getting his toes to his mouth aided the baby's earlier development.

#### **The onset of shyness**

Another typical behavior change observed during this age period really also has to do with limits, although at first glance it seems that we are dealing with something altogether different. This is the fact that even children who have heretofore not shown unreasonable shyness or fearfulness of strangers frequently develop, at this point, extreme shyness and, beyond the age of one year, often a sort of silly embarrassment when exposed to contact with strangers.

If you think of the typical outward signs that go with shyness and embarrassment you will realize that what they denote is a sudden heightened awareness of the boundaries of the self. Even in adult speech we say that we felt like "sinking into the ground" for embarrassment or shame; blushing actually makes the boundary of the person especially visible; closing the eyes or turning away as children so often do is clearly based on the ostrich policy of "if I don't see you, you don't see me"; and shrinking postures suggest a desire to make oneself as inconspicuous as can be.

#### **Awareness of self**

Coming face to face with an unfamiliar person does, in fact, for children at about this age (and sometimes for older children and adults as well) bring with it a sudden and unwanted awareness of the self as we imagine others see us from the outside. I mention this fearfulness of strangers not only because it is a reaction which often puzzles parents, who think that someone must have frightened the child without

their knowing it, but also because I would like to suggest that the outstanding behavior characteristics of the toddler make sense and form a unified, understandable whole.

#### **A contest of wills**

Difficulty in understanding this may be dangerous to the developing relationship between the child and other members of the family. Some mothers, noting that the child can no longer be directed or comforted as easily as before, begin to feel his assertion of autonomy as a sort of threat. "After all," parents think, "I am the adult and I ought to be able to control this little paragon of mine. Once he begins to feel that he is boss and that I cannot stop him from doing things or get him to do things according to my will, he will lose confidence in me." Or they may feel that

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## ***The inspiring story of a child's faith that brought beauty to his village***

# **The POPPY SEEDS**



*By Clyde Robert Bulla*

*Illustrated by Jean Charlot*

This lovely book, with its beautiful color pictures, tells how little Pablo wrought a miraculous change with a handful of poppy seeds. "Bold illustrations, striking endpapers, and jacket give vivid expression to this moving story of the power of beauty and faith."—*Saturday Review* Ages 5-8 \$2.75

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if they let the child do as he wants they will never be able to teach him things and protect him from various dangers.

Faced with such a situation there often develops something like a contest of wills. This not only cheats the parent out of the enormous fun that is to be had from watching the youngster explore and conquer his world; it also may mean that soon the child begins to feel that adults, instead of being a comfort and a help, are chiefly obstacles and objects of resentment. Worse yet, the moments of triumph of which we have spoken, and which should be pure joy, may then coincide with situations in which it is clear to parent and child alike that the child has won a point and the parent has lost.

#### **Too strict curbs**

Parents, being human, do not like to be worsted, and directly or indirectly show resentment. Children, in the kind of situation of which I speak, can reach the point where they do not dare to act on impulse and try things out, for fear of arousing the parents' anger. The consequences, while not necessarily fatal any more than with other difficulties mentioned before, can be serious. Children may feel uncertainty about the constancy of their parents' affection, and parents may then find themselves with a three- or four-year-old who has less spunk and initiative than they would wish to see, and who, despite his size and intelligence, seems somehow babyish.

#### **Too much freedom**

The opposite extreme, also seen quite often among parents, is equally unfortunate. This is when parents misinterpret what we have learned about the effects of too harsh discipline and come to feel that even small children must *never* be thwarted. We have all seen parents go to absurd lengths in letting children proceed with any action impulse, allowing them to interfere with the peace of the household and with the possessions of others to a degree which can only lead to disaster later on.

This kind of a "complete freedom" does not make the child self-confident and self-reliant. On the contrary, it tends to make children both fearful and confused. In order to feel self-confident and enterprising it is also necessary to feel reasonably safe. When you are twelve months old, and even when you are two years old and beyond, you cannot feel safe unless you have an absolute conviction that the adults looking after you will not let you come to harm. Even though there may be tears and struggles as the youngster is removed from the dangerous window ledge or as he is made to leave daddy's whisky glass alone, the child senses very well that he is being protected from consequences that would be dangerous or unpleasant. It goes without saying that the child will sense only what is really true about the limits imposed. If over and over again he is prevented from action not because it is harmful but because he must "learn to obey"; if he is surrounded by tantalizing objects that must be left alone; or if there are not enough places and things he can experiment with, he will, of course, suffer from a sense of helplessness and frustration.

#### **Growing up is their business**

I hope I have conveyed to you my conviction that by and large children know more about the business of their own growing up than we do, and that in our efforts to support and guide them we can do no better than to try to understand the meaning of their behavior and be guided by what each child's actions tell us about him and his needs of the moment. At the same time, we are continually learning to better understand why children do what they do when they do it. The patient study through which we attempt to discover the meaning of children's behavior would be blind and aimless unless we found some general and theoretical concepts that appear to fit the facts. I take it that examination of the general concepts and their application is the aim of conferences such as this one, and of the Child Study Association as a whole.



# The school years: an age of discovery

Still troubled by babyish impulses, yet beginning to take his place in the world, the school-age child may baffle and gratify his parents in the same moment

Our focus in the last years has been so much on what imprint the parents leave on their children that we have often neglected the other side of the relationship. What is the impact of children on their parents?

The family is a fluid complex of feelings, never static, always changing. Though each member has a basic pattern, each new phase of growth, each new event elaborates the design.

The long period of infancy and early childhood allowed in our culture prepares the parents for some of these mutations. In a way, they "grow up" again with each child, but with each one in a different way.

When the first child's "age of discovery" is reached, it is challenging to the parents as well as to the little boy or girl. With the first day of formal school, a new era begins for everyone, down to the youngest member of the family.

How will the father and mother take school? Observation shows us how varied their reactions may be. Some mothers may look forward eagerly to this milestone in their child's growing up—even with relief to his daily going-out from the house. But others relinquish the school child reluctantly, unwillingly to share their precious intimacy with any outsider. To such a mother,

the teacher becomes a danger, a threat that she may lose something. For this child, the adjustment to school will be difficult. When this adjustment begins to seem impossible, a school phobia often develops. The child senses that his mother wants him at home, and the mother finds excuses to hold him there. The upset stomach at school time is a complaint we are all familiar with. Often the mother is unaware of her part in the trouble.

A mother whose child does not go eagerly to school would do well to examine her own feelings before looking for another cause of the trouble. Certainly there may be other causes: the child's feeling of not being accepted by the teacher or his new companions; his anxiety that he won't know what to do in this strange world; competition with younger children at home who may seem to be getting more of his mother's time, and so on.

But in each one of these causes, the mother and father have some part. Perhaps one parent did not like school himself, and so must relive his unpleasant experience when the child starts his formal education. Perhaps one parent has never made peace with authority and finds any teacher forbidding and discomforting. Perhaps the

father or mother has a lurking fear that eventually the child's learning will show up his own inadequacy, so that a gnawing rivalry may set in as his schooling proceeds.

#### ***Hand-me-down ambitions***

The parents may hope to find in the child's education fulfillment of their own frustrated ambitions for learning. If so, the child's grades and achievements become matters of great moment, and many parents resort to exhortation and pressure and even punishment to realize in this second-hand way the thwarted hopes of their own past. The same could be said of the athletic ambitions that fathers commonly have for boys, and the mothers' longing for the attractiveness of their growing girls. The parents' burdens are thus handed down to the youngsters and show up in their attitudes toward education and toward many other experiences in the child's life.

I have spoken first of school because this age of discovery in the youngster's life is a time for steady development of the ego. The child now has a strong thrust of interest away from the small family unit in which he has lived, dependent on his parents for everything from sustenance to direction. This is a time of concern with the realities of his world outside the home—with playmates, new games, and sports, with what other children do and say and wear; a time of exploration of the community, the city, the wide world. It is a time of interest in animals and how they live and propagate; of fascination with the ways of other, far-off peoples, and even with the moon and the conquest of space.

#### ***Challenge and fears***

These are all concerns of the ego, the conscious, healthy personality of the growing child. It is often hard for the parents to keep up with the pace of these widening interests. They may be baffled, amazed, annoyed, even threatened by the questions asked, the information demanded. For those who can go along, a new interest and insight may be the reward.

But the excitement of discovery does not eliminate all the child's concern with sexual fears, fears of injury and fears of death, which were easy to detect in the earlier years. He has learned ways now to handle those fears; he has set up defenses against them. Or, one might truly say, he has learned how to live with them. He uses the same means employed by every grown person who is a satisfactory member of society, but these are also the very means which we call unhealthy when they are excessive and interfere with growth. What are these means?

#### ***The child's defenses: repression***

1) *Repression*. He puts aside his earlier fears and looks for new interests which, in the normal child, crowd out the disturbing thoughts. This does not mean that the old impulses—to be babyish, to fight, to think what to him are nasty or destructive thoughts—have vanished forever. They can flash back, and do, when the ego weakens under strain.

At such times, the parents can be sorely tried. A usually reasonable child who suddenly becomes unreasonable, demanding and destructive, often comes as a surprise to parents and teachers who are likely to respond impulsively by protesting, "Why, this isn't like you!" But repression breaks down occasionally in every child. It is only when such infantile behavior is persistent and intense that parents need be concerned. Patience is more in order than scolding.

#### ***Compulsiveness***

2) *Compulsiveness*. This word is used so often with psychopathological meaning that we may forget it is another normal device for self-expression in childhood. Two brief examples will explain this: one nine-year-old girl I know makes an almost daily list of "my best friends," ranking them carefully and rearranging the rank with every incident.

A boy of ten collects coins, which he endlessly arranges in designs, catalogues, counts, puts in new boxes and so on. His



parents hope he is doing his homework.

Collecting, bartering, reading catalogues, ordering useless things—sometimes even stealing from a classmate to enlarge a collection—all these are common phenomena of the age of discovery.

These activities may be interpreted as the child's effort to master reality, to control things, and thus to control himself. Useless as the precious "junk" seems, it is serving a purpose of which the child is unaware. He is taking care of tensions in his own way.

Compulsiveness can go outside the range of the normal, as we often see in the clinics. Children who develop rigid rituals in their daily lives, who go into panic if the ritual is disturbed, who cannot sleep for fear the door is not locked or the gas jet not turned off—these children need more than the patience of parents. They may need some professional help in understanding their fears and in finding better ways of resolving them.

#### **Sublimation**

3) *Sublimation*. This is the rather grandiose word for describing the method employed by every child of turning unacceptable activities and interests into acceptable modes, tolerated and even esteemed by society. Parents, teachers, all adults who are engaged in child care, aid and abet this universal tendency. They give little children clay and finger paints to gratify the more homely interest in messing. They teach children happy and gay exercises in play to take care of the restlessness which often tries to relieve itself through masturbation. They offer competitive games to lift the child's natural aggressiveness to a higher plane of satisfaction, and so on.

In the years of discovery, the child finds his own sublimations. He organizes his own games; he reads stories of adventure and enjoys them on TV; he turns his curiosity, once centered on his own body and the bodies of others, into a wider search for information; he searches to find out how things work in every realm of science.

#### **Conscience formation**

4) *Conscience formation*. The "nos" and permissions of the parents in the first years of life have gradually sunk into the child's mind and feelings, and in these middle years have, to a great extent, become his own. His conscience is now getting established, but through the hard way of trial and error. Knowing what is right or wrong does not come instinctively; it must be learned. This makes the child self-conscious about decisions, often uncertain and in conflict. Conflict cannot be avoided; it is part of the learning process.

In his efforts to stabilize his conscience, the child often becomes rigid in his code—more rigid even than his parents. He sits in harsh judgment on himself and others. This is demonstrated in the way he often writes out schedules and rules for himself, in the general practice of his clubs to make rules and to mete out discipline for infractions.

The result may be too many restrictions on his life. His parents may become irritated with his rigidity and bossiness. He suffers from the conflicts of authority which he feels around him.

I have outlined briefly the chief means used by the youngster's ego to combat his fears of his impulses. These need not be called defenses, as against something terrible, but rather adaptive mechanisms employed to assist him in the business of growing up.

In this way he frees himself for interest and experience in the outside world. He turns his mental energy to learning and launches for himself the period of his greatest capacity for absorbing education.

#### **Satisfaction and nuisance**

In this period of growth, the child can be at one moment the greatest satisfaction and in the next the greatest nuisance to his family. Parents will respond according to their own disposition, their own experience when they themselves were at this age, and the present circumstances. Their hopes,

expectations and ambitions, already deeply determined, are also helping to determine those of their children. They see ahead what they wish their children to be. The famous historian who said "The future determines the past" might have been talking about children.

From the child in the age of discovery, the parents may take some important clues. He is seeking adventure and new experience, yet he clings to protection. He needs both and both can be supplied by his family. He often resists the routines set up by his father and mother and the school, yet he needs the help of established custom against which to measure himself. Parents may think him inconsistent, but this is his way of learning.

It is a truism that the second and third children seem to get along better in life. Their parents are no longer so watchful and fearful, and they note that under this more relaxed regime the children find their own

ways more naturally and easily.

When the child is greatly taken up with the outside world, he begins to be, or seems to be, more indifferent to family ties. The gang or the big boys and girls in the neighborhood are more important to him. Parents are hurt and gratified in the same moment. Yet the same children are "babies" when hungry or tired or sick.

The outgoing quality of these children, when not warped in earlier years, is not only a joy to witness; it is the spark that keeps community life going. They have come off the infantile receiving line and are turning their attention outward. This is the beginning of brotherhood.

All family life is a progression during which forces of the old give way in favor of the new. This would be a cold definition if we did not include the special service of the family when the "new" is fearful or cruel: to be a refuge until strength is restored.

## Common problems of sickness and growth

By Milton J. E. Senn, M.D.

The impact on parents of children's illnesses and normal development is a powerful and often neglected factor in working out the family equation

Every parent is aware of the fact that changes in his children's physical growth, whether healthy or not, affect him as well as his children. We may take it for granted that there is a back-and-forth flow of influence between parents and children because of the intimate nature of their relationships. But here I will focus only on some of the stages and changes in children's growth which influence parents, em-

phasizing for simplicity a one-directional relationship.

This topic is not one of mere academic interest. It has important practical and clinical applications. For example, the Department of Pediatrics at Yale University, which I represent, considers that its function is not only to assess the child-patient's health or sickness, but also to assist parents in dealing with their feelings as they come



to grips with the facts and plan further steps in the child's care and rearing. As physicians we recognize certain periods in the growth of children which can appear as crises to parents. And we know that any illness, however mild, may assume the appearance of a catastrophe under certain circumstances. In order to be effective as physicians we must anticipate emotional responses in parents and must know how to deal with them constructively. We feel also that some of the unrealistic hopes and expectations, as well as the irrational worries and fears that parents have about children, may be avoided if we help parents understand the nature of growth and the true meaning of an illness or a physical variant. With this purpose in mind I will now consider some of the more common conditions which confront parents and call forth attitudes and feelings which must be reckoned with.

#### ***The first encounter***

Let us begin with the first face-to-face meeting of infant and parent. To many parents, especially those experiencing parenthood for the first time, such a meeting brings many surprises, even shocks. The infant is not even a reasonable facsimile of the baby of their fantasies. The flushed color of the skin, the scantiness or superabundance of hair, the large and wobbly head, the small, sightless eyes, the trembling mouth, the jerky movements of the arms and legs and the distressing cry combine to create a grotesque picture. Yet this baby is normal newborn. Fortunately for all concerned, there is a change before long. Within several days, at most after a few weeks, the strangeness of the infant's appearance lessens and he becomes acceptable to the parents, whether or not he resembles the baby of their dreams. Where normal infants continue to dissatisfy or worry their parents, the basic trouble then lies in the parents.

We have found that one way to hasten the growth of familiarity between mother and baby is by the rooming-in arrangement.

A mother who has a chance to participate in the care of her new baby, and who has him by her side several hours each day, becomes accustomed to him and develops skill in satisfying his needs. Even in those rare instances where a baby has been born with a developmental defect, such as a deformed foot, the rooming-in plan has been an important way of helping some mothers overcome their initial reactions of disappointment and shame. Although not all mothers should be expected to want their newborn babies with them much of the time in the early days of life, greater efforts should be made to provide such living-together arrangements for those who do.

#### ***The premature baby***

One of the most frequent causes for concern and disappointment is the premature birth of a baby. However mature he may be in development, the fact that he was delivered before the expected time often distresses the parents. The term "premature" stirs up visions of a protracted residence in a hospital incubator, and of prolonged infant care leading to chronic weakness and dependency. Mothers sometimes blame themselves for failing their husbands, and fear criticisms of relatives and friends. What they should know is that the degree of prematurity, in the sense of time of delivery, has importance only as it carries with it immaturity of development. For example, many babies born one month "premature" are as fully developed and able to live normally outside the uterus as if they were nine-month babies. Maturity is defined by the weight, size and behavior of the infant, and not by the actual time spent in the uterus. It should be reassuring to parents to know that, even if immature at birth, babies who survive the first month after delivery usually continue to live and grow in a healthy fashion if they receive proper care. By two years, or before, they will have caught up with their age-mates who were sturdier individuals at birth.

Parental feelings are apt in many cases to result from misconceptions about how

children grow, and from too little allowance for individual patterns of development. For example, there is a wide range of normal birthweights. As they grow, healthy babies double their birthweight by five to six months, and triple it by ten to eleven months. But some are more rapid all along the line and others slower. Babies generally learn to walk by eighteen months, but some healthy infants do not walk before twenty months while others have already achieved this skill by twelve months. The early developer may continue to be speedy throughout his years of growth, but again this is not necessarily true and there may be periods when he slows down while the late starter catches up or even surpasses him.

#### **Comparisons with the "normal"**

Most parents watch with absorption the height and weight changes of their growing children, seeking to compare these with the "normal," and making comparisons with other children of similar age. They worry about the boy or girl who is considered under par because he weighs or measures less than some others of the same age, and take great pride in the child who exceeds his age-mates and looks "well-proportioned." Yet in both instances he may be either healthy and normal or pathologically deviant. Pediatricians studying the same group of growing children over a period of years have found that comparing the child with others is much less revealing and helpful than comparing each child with himself at various stages of his development. Whether he grows, and at what rate, are more important facts than his actual size and weight at any given time and gradually reveal his individual pattern of growth. This may differ from that of the so-called normal (in the sense of the usual), yet be perfectly normal for him.

Parents are also apt to forget, in their concentration on the child's progress, that growth normally has spurts and lags. Infants on permissive feeding schedules may exceed the customary weight gains for a

while, but return to the more usual rate when their appetites slacken. Such temporary digressions frighten parents who have become accustomed to regularity in gains in weight and height. Typical spurts which parents should anticipate are the weight gains in the first year of life, and in puberty. Equally normal and predictable is the slower rate beginning at the end of the first year of life, and continuing until around the fifth or sixth year. There are good reasons for the slow-down, but parents are disturbed by the lessened food intake and capricious appetite, sometimes producing a body which seems to them too thin. But here again, thinness is by itself no sign of malnutrition or sickness.

The school years from six to twelve are characterized by slow growth in height, and gradually increasing gain in weight so that children lose the thin and wiry look of the nursery school period. Girls begin to get a plumper look as they approach puberty. Then comes a rapid and sharp gain in height and an even more accelerated gain in weight. The female child, like her mother, is particularly conscious of her weight increase, and change in body contour. There is dread of overweight, and apprehension that the curves of the body will not assume the proper degree of rounded prominence. The female sex is fortunate, however, in having the assistance of an industry which is ingenious in providing accessories of attire of one kind or another which can deal effectively in improving the mistakes of nature. The male is less fortunate. Although something can be done for the lanky six-footer with flat chest and

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elongated arms and legs by padding his coat at the shoulder and limiting his attire to double-breasted suits and bow ties, so far there has not been a satisfactory camouflaging for the obese boy with protuberant breasts.

It is remarkable how much meaning children and parents give to the size of the sexual organs, and to secondary sex components like the breasts and body hair. To the growing child, normal-sized genitals and breasts may appear abnormal. There is much comparing of self with peers, with the evidence frequently unfavorable for the child who takes almost any other person as the normal. Children fear that the "abnormality" will be permanent.

Many parents attentively watch the shape and size of the child's genitals from birth to adolescence, for the adult links appearance to function and greatly fears abnormality of function. Although such fears may be projections of their own sexual failings, they are not necessarily so: the fact is that virility, fecundity and sexual potency are high on the list of attainments considered desirable in practically every society. But it is important to know that the relationship of genital size to function is relative. Smallness does not as a rule mean weakness or inability to procreate, nor does bigness guarantee vigor. The parent who is impatient with the development of his son's genitals should be careful lest he impart his feelings to the boy, who probably already has worries of his own on this score. Such a parent is apt to urge a physician to give the child glandular injections, but the wise physician will not allow himself to be pushed into giving hormones against his better judgment. The chances are excellent that the slow developer sexually will catch up with himself and his peers after his physiological apparatus has become functionally ready.

The factors and influences which determine the rate, as well as the manner, of development include not only heredity, constitution and familial predispositions, but the many elements which make up the

whole outside environment. I must emphasize, however, that today little is known about the specific influence of heredity and constitution. There is a small but well advertised group of child psychologists in this country which steadily promotes its pet notion that there is a cause and effect relationship between body build and behavior and health. They maintain, for example, that a child's temperament depends on whether his body is short and stocky, tall and thin or something in between. This theory also emphasizes that temperament is laid down in the genes, and that germ plasm may carry the seeds of juvenile delinquency.

This philosophy is frightening to parents, because it implies that a certain course of events is inevitable, and that it is futile to prevent, modify or control circumstances which are destined to produce unfortunate effects. While these theories may one day be proven, the fact is that they are not yet supported by scientific evidence. Human geneticists remind us that heredity is not destiny. Personally I am not yet willing to give up the concept which stresses the possibility of modifying the human constitution and controlling the environment.

#### ***Cataloging children's behavior***

Another common practice which confuses parents and sometimes causes them anxiety is the cataloging and identification of children's behavior by chronological age. For example, some psychologists of this school divide childhood into units of age—two years, two-and-a-half years, three years, four years and upward—listing under each many items of behavior such as eating, sleeping, reading the comics, lying, stealing and even proneness to body injury.

The data for these behavior "profiles" and "normative developmental schedules" were collected from a relatively small number of children from a highly selective group of families. However, this tabulation has led these psychologists and many lay people to talk glibly about "Twos," "Threes," "Fours," "Fives," etc. as if they

were distinct personality types with clear lines of demarcation between each. A troubled parent is advised, "Things should be a lot better when she's ten." And a 17-year-old boy is told that his behavior is on the same beam as two-and-a-half-, five-and-a-half- and eleven-year-olds. It has even been suggested that there is a "universality" of these "normal" behavioral characteristics among children throughout the world, regardless of culture and ethnic differences.

Although the originators of these schedules admit that there is both a proper use of such age norms and a misuse of them, and although they stress the variations between children and the fact that no two children are exactly alike, they have, nevertheless, justified their schedules on the grounds that parents "wish to know how their child's mind matures and how the patterns of behavior normally change with age." Stating that "age norms or normative character sketches always need critical interpretation," they go on to say that such norms are useful not only in determining whether a child's behavior is near ordinary expectations, but also whether the behavior is well balanced in the major fields.

Although parents are cautioned against using these standards without discretion and care, it is suggested that they compare their children with the norms, and if defects or deviations in any field of behavior are recognized, that they seek the advice of the family physician and consult a specialist. As a result, there is a tendency among parents today to follow schedules too rigidly and to become upset whenever deviations from them are noted in their children.

#### ***When a child is sick***

In the matter of children's sicknesses, and their influence on parents, I will speak mainly in generalities. No illness strikes all parents the same way, with the possible exception of a few dreaded diseases like polio. The illnesses which carry with them pain, restraint of activity and temporary or permanent disability are naturally

upsetting to patients and to parents, and even the threat of these symptoms evokes strong feelings. But a sick child (or his parent) who cannot accept the limitations put upon him by an illness, and who resists or otherwise denies them, will in this way interfere with the forces of recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

A parent who is intolerant of illness will minimize the symptoms, and his child in turn may deny them, refusing care until his physical state overwhelms his psychological defenses. Another parent may be of the school that gives in completely to an illness at the very beginning, and will therefore encourage a sick child to become even more dependent and regressive than need be. This interplay of psychologic and physical forces accounts for some of the bizarre symptom formations one sees in illness. The psychological reaction of the parent may so affect the child that there is in some a delay in asking for help, in others an effort to prolong convalescence.

#### ***Taking feelings into account***

Some parents interrupt treatment and take the medical management of their child's sickness into their own hands, as if to prove that they are better able than the doctor (because they are parents) to give the child what he needs. At times there is intense rivalry between parents and medical and nursing staffs as to who can do the most for the patient. When psychiatric consultation is needed, parents are particularly apt to put off looking for such assistance. They feel that they should have another chance at helping the child. Accepting professional assistance is very difficult for many parents because they believe this is an indication of their own failures.

The prospect of surgery usually arouses emotion in both a child and his parents. An operation means different things, according to one's earlier experiences and stage of development: punishment, disfigurement, mutilation, loss of body part and body function, separation from loved ones, even death.



When medical and hospital staffs began to realize that a person's feelings at the time of an operation influenced his reaction to the anesthesia and surgery, they began to change their methods of care. For that reason, traditional practices of impersonal management are increasingly being replaced by more humane approaches. Daily visiting hours for parents have been lengthened. Some hospitals have individualized their practices even more, so that parents may room-in with their sick children when it is especially important to show the child that he has not been deserted by his family. Periods of hospitalization have been shortened (within limits of good medical care) so that children may return to their homes as soon as possible. Parents and children may be given some psychological preparation before an operation by giving them a chance to talk things over with nurses, personal physicians, surgeons and anesthetists. Methods of administering anesthetics which will have less frightening effects are now preferred. Pediatric pavilions in some hospitals have "play nurses" and volunteers who help children spend their time more actively and more enjoyably. Play is encouraged which will help children express feelings and bring out their questions about themselves and their illnesses.

#### **Problems of convalescence**

Fear of becoming different from others is always easily aroused in both children and parents. Parents may be reassured to know that most diseases do not leave after-effects. However, where a person's natural differences are intensified by illness or its residue, child-patients should be helped psychologically as well as medically to overcome such handicaps, or to adapt as satisfactorily as possible. This calls for an approach on the part of the attending physician that takes account of the many factors involved and that is applied from the beginning of treatment through convalescence. From the parents, it requires patience, faith and hope. While the sick

child usually has these qualities within himself, they will weaken and disappear unless they are nurtured and encouraged.

Young children, like parents, can become morose and despondent. Just as children take on the mood and feelings of their parents, so parents unconsciously can identify with their children and develop the same symptoms without being physically "diseased." Such parents "get well" when their feelings about the children are modified. Some parents do not achieve this until their children are entirely recovered. This is a good reason for the child's physician to concern himself with the parents, and to include them as early as possible in the treatment program.

#### **When tragedy comes**

Parents of children suffering from an incurable disease, like some forms of cancer, go through many changes of attitudes and emotions. On first receiving the diagnosis they are prone to accept it intellectually, as if they understood the words. Sometimes they feel a kind of relief because a definite diagnosis has been made, particularly where the symptoms were unusually baffling. The meaning of the diagnosis is only fully realized after they have asked about the progress and outcome of the disease. Then comes the numbing shock and refusal to believe the verdict. Next, parents request additional medical opinions and consultation with other physicians to verify the prognosis.

Parents may become understandably reckless at this point in spending money, and be uncritical in their acceptance of anything which promises some hope. Throughout, of course, they feel anxiety, but this may be masked by other emotions such as guilt. Often they begin to examine themselves and go over the past, and they tend to magnify previous experiences which probably had nothing to do with the development of the illness. However irrational it may be, parents feel the need of blaming themselves—or they may blame each other, especially if there has been

marital maladjustment. Soon the search for cause includes appraisal of the acts of others. Grandparents may be brought into the picture as somehow being at fault. On the other hand, they may be called on for help in the care of the child or direction of the household.

#### **Comparing progress**

Sometimes parents of children from different families who are sick with the same disease feel the need to compare the patients' progress, the skill of the physicians and the efficiency of the nurses. Other parents isolate themselves, to grieve alone. The physicians may be blamed for not preventing the illness, or for not recognizing it sooner. All medical science is blamed for its inadequacies in not providing curative remedies. As the full meaning of separation and loss come to the parent, his thoughts frequently turn to religion and to prayer and church attendance. There may be a reactivation of religious conflicts which had seemed settled and resolved, or a new appreciation of what is called "Life," an awareness said to be born of grief and suffering. Then, so often, tender understanding and tranquility come upon parents and children in the final days of being together.

#### **The broad view**

I have attempted to give a broad view of the common situations in children's health and illness which affect the attitudes and feelings of their parents. It is helpful to know that the majority of all questions about physical growth and development which parents bring to physicians may be truthfully answered with the assurance that the children involved are normal and healthy. This information is usually enough to dispel parents' anxiety. But when there is real cause for concern, parents may have a difficult time making an adjustment and may even need some psychological help. First and foremost this should come from the physician in attendance who makes the diagnosis and treats the child. Where such

help proves inadequate, or needs to be supplemented, it may be necessary to seek further professional help from those specially trained and experienced in psychotherapy.

## **CSAA Institute**

The Ninth Annual Institute for Workers in Parent Education under the auspices of the Child Study Association of America was held on March 29th and 30th in New York. The purpose of the Institute was to try to find more effective ways of communication in parent education—ways of conveying information which would provide a common core of understanding for all participants in the process. Since these participants include people working in various capacities—as writer, lecturer, counselor and discussion group leader—a series of three-session workshops was held to explore various aspects of planning, methodology, materials and research in parent education.

Preceding the Workshops, Dr. Benjamin Spock spoke on the "Values and Limits of Parent Education," and a panel chaired by Mrs. Elizabeth Healy Ross, Deputy Chief of the U. S. Children's Bureau, discussed the issues raised in his speech.

The Institute, which is planned each year by an active committee whose members represent a large number of national organizations, was extended this year from one to two days to give time for more satisfactory discussion and exploration in the various workshops. Participants came from a wide geographic area: Tennessee, Ohio, Maine, Canada, Michigan, New England, as well as states adjoining New York; and from a variety of settings, including family agencies, mental health associations, schools, clinics, local health services. The results of this program, which proved to be a most fruitful one, will be reflected in the full *Proceedings* which will shortly be ready for distribution to all participants, as part of their Institute fee, and will be available to others at 50¢ a copy from CSAA headquarters.



# Values and the world we live in

Our sons and daughters will be ready to channel the fabulous stream of change only if they have principles as points of reference and trained minds for tools

A free society may be defined as one in which people are free to make choices. If this is a correct definition, responsible citizens of this country may be sure that we have not succumbed to whatever threatens freedom, for we are confronted day in and day out with choices which not only can but must be made.

They are difficult choices, partly because they are so numerous, partly because the lines between them are so often blurred. Some of our options cannot be classified as either right or wrong, as either black or white; often we are faced with one less-than-good possibility as against another less-than-good.

Our modern world thrusts innumerable choices upon us. Think of the range of experience to which you and I have been introduced almost by accident. I have called, via Mr. Murrow's coaxial cable, on people I would never have an opportunity to meet at first hand. I have watched a bomb explosion to which no scientist in his right mind would have thought of inviting a non-scientist like me.

I followed Dave Garroway and his "Today" crew to Florida this winter and was introduced vicariously to a resort way of life to which I am not accustomed. I know more of the fictional wild west than I ever expected to know. I have read enough detective stories and watched Sherlock Holmes and Charlie Chan enough to feel

more intimate with dens of iniquity than a preacher's wife has any personal reason to be.

Remembering, too, that fifty percent of our American families have moved their residence since the war, one will agree that as an entire nation we are coming repeatedly into contact with an increasingly wide variety of people, places, practices and values.

Such contacts may lead to misunderstanding rather than to better relations. One by-product of superficial contact may be, for instance, that it makes us less rather than more willing to approve foreign ways of doing things. When remote strangers are sufficiently far away they often look quaint and appealing. When we see them more closely, their odd ways may begin to look threatening or at least queer instead.

We all tend to judge any action or event in the light of our own cultural patterns and our own personal values. When these same actions or events are judged in the light of other people's patterns and values they often take on a totally different appearance.

Do you remember the era of collegiate panty-raids? I thought this a silly, cheap, foolish, transient, totally temporary undergraduate craze. I classed it, in what little thought I gave to the matter, as the same kind of collegiate humor that made students in earlier periods swallow goldfish

or wear beer jackets with names written at odd angles all over them. When I went to India, however, I discovered that students, faculty members and parents—large groups of thoughtful people—were sincerely worried about coeducation because the world coverage of this particular episode had associated coeducation with what looked—at that distance—like the ultimate in vulgarity. And they were asking: can morality and coeducation co-exist?

#### **As others see us**

This is not to assert that such misunderstanding is necessarily a one-way distortion. I certainly was surprised to learn from a Hindu mother that she wished her daughter could have been married at the age of six instead of ten years later. She wanted her child to be happy with her husband's family and was afraid it would be harder for her to feel thoroughly at ease with them at the advanced age of sixteen than if she had lived with them since childhood.

Perhaps the most startling discovery I have made, on a series of trips to different lands, was that many people honestly have no desire to be Americans! They don't envy us our material conveniences, for they think we pay a too high price for them in nervous tension, hurry, worry—not to mention dollars. Contacts, therefore, call not only for openness to new experience but for re-evaluation of one's self and one's own culture.

#### **Segregation based on age**

The wide variety of choices open to us in our pattern of life is further complicated by the fact that different age groups have different choices to make. This has always been true up to a certain point, but now we live in a curious kind of segregation based on age. Such age-consciousness is perhaps more characteristic of urban than of rural life, and of economically privileged families than of families living in crowded quarters; but it is true in many American homes.

It happens thus that children are exposed to choices both appalling to their parents

and utterly foreign to the experience of an older generation. I talked recently with the father and mother of a brilliant college graduate whose intellectual distinction had won her fellowships that involved travel abroad. She had met many foreign students and enjoyed speaking their languages and studying in their countries. She had met artists, writers and scholars whose codes of behavior were shocking to her parents. The problem of this young woman's ethical adjustments was all snarled up with parental emotions strained by the discovery that a whole world existed in which their child was at home, but with which they were totally unfamiliar.

The change affecting us all, willy nilly—and complicating relationships between different generations—is not a passing phase in our society. The fact that so much of it stems from technological development means that we can anticipate further change, and at an ever increasing rate.

#### **The fabulous future**

I am fascinated by the prophecies we hear or read of the kind of world we will probably have fifty or one hundred years from now. Let me quote a few sentences from an article in the January 1955 issue of *Fortune*, written by General Sarnoff of RCA, entitled "The Fabulous Future":

"Small atomic generators, installed in homes and industrial plants, will provide power for years and ultimately for a lifetime without recharging . . . Fresh water, purified from the briny seas, will enable us to make deserts flourish . . . guided missiles, transcontinental and transoceanic, will find vital civilian uses . . . Pilotless aircraft for passengers are within the realm of the possible. Great fleets of personal helicopters and other planes will make the principal airways almost as busy as the highways on the ground; and electronic controls will insure safe travel in both dimensions . . . The fact that electronics and atomics are unfolding simultaneously is a portent of the amazing changes ahead. Never before have two such mighty forces been un-



leashed at the same time. Together they are certain to dwarf the industrial revolutions brought about by steam and electricity. There is no element of material progress we know today—in the biological and chemical fields, in atomics and electronics, in engineering and physics—that will not seem from the vantage point of 1980 a fumbling prelude.”

#### **Guideposts in coping with change**

It is safe to assume, on the strength of such an assurance, that our children will have reason to be concerned for their grandchildren lest they in their turn have difficulty in facing the changing world of their generation. We and they will be helped to confront such alterations in ways of living, however, and to cope with the confusions and consequences, by keeping in mind the facts that:

1) Confusion results from accelerating change, whether or not anyone has deliberately willed the outcome. The situations I have been describing involve no one’s malice, though the confusion that ensues may, of course, be complicated by wicked men who can make use of it to further nefarious ends. Such men must be dealt with as special problems. Yet by and large the difficulties of living in a period of flux are essentially impersonal in their causation. Recognition of this fact saves us from wasting our emotion upon scapegoats, and opens the door to an objective handling of situations;

2) Change is going to be normal for a long time to come. The sooner we learn to take it in our stride the more able we will be to recognize it as a challenge, rather than rejecting it as a threatening evil;

3) Change can be directed by people who are sufficiently wise and determined;

4) There is vast satisfaction to be derived from a cooperative effort to direct change into the channel of shared principles.

To keep change from being overpowering, however, we must have people who are indeed wise enough and determined

enough. How do we get them? How may oncoming generations be provided with the wisdom and determination that will bring satisfaction and success in the cooperative direction of change? This is easier to suggest than to accomplish; for freedom of choice involves pre-awareness of the consequences—otherwise choice becomes a gamble, not an act of rational volition. Yet, in an age of vast complexity people need vast knowledge, in order to be aware of what their decisions will entail. This is fundamentally an *intellectual requirement*.

#### **The art of thinking**

I wish I could underscore, effectively, my conviction that mental equipment constitutes an uniquely important tool for the years ahead. Man’s mind is his most characteristic resource. We cannot afford to let it rust from disuse. Men can think straight without being professional scholars. Bookish learning, though vitally important, is different in kind and value from the functional skill of the intellect which needs to be cultivated to the utmost capacity of every citizen, whatever his formal education.

We cheat ourselves when we restrict our children to a type of experience, whether in or out of school, which deprives them of training in the art of thinking. We need a citizenry of trained and disciplined

#### ***A father to his son***

In the first two years of your life, you were my king.  
From two to seven you were my child.  
From seven to fourteen you were my opponent.  
From fourteen to twenty you were as my younger brother.  
From twenty on you are my equal.

From a speech on “Education in Indonesia” delivered at a parent-teacher meeting in New York City, by the Hon. Achmad Natanagara, Consul General of Indonesia.

minds, capable of making nice distinctions, able to detect the difference between the plausible and the true, keen enough to recognize specious argument, strong enough to resist propaganda, prepared to follow a logical path from premise to conclusion.

Skill in this art cannot be acquired suddenly in maturity. It should be cultivated from childhood through old age. But however much anyone knows, *his choice will eventually depend upon his attitudes and purposes*. These, in turn, are dependent on ethical, moral, aesthetic and spiritual values. A changing social order inevitably upsets cultural patterns, making it important for thoughtful people to differentiate between principles and practices. This is extremely hard for some people to do, and especially for those who have grown up in a more stable society where what people did could be associated, as a rule, with what was acceptable within their group.

#### **Practices and principles**

The father of a college-age daughter told me recently that modern young people are remarkably conservative. They prefer conversation at proms to steady dancing. They expect their friends to have brains. They drink very little. They are under no compulsion to smoke if they don't want to. They respect each other's right to differ and feel free to maintain their own standards. It was a report on a magnificently healthy group of young people.

Eventually this father mentioned the fact that his daughter had come in from a dance at 6:30 a.m., remarking that this would have been scandalous once but that neither he nor his wife made any reference to it except to observe that she must be tired, to which she agreed. This family, it seems to me, is able to differentiate between relatively new practices and principles of long duration.

Some modern choices in the realm of principle—very live options, indeed—are of profound importance for our future.

#### **A time for decision**

As we face the fabulous tomorrow—fabulous either in high achievement or in catastrophic destruction—we have to choose between conflicting ideas regarding the fundamental, the inherent nature of man. Is he really “endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights”? Does he really have the dignity of a divinely endowed creature? Is it his essential humanness that gives him his dignity, or do some races possess more of it than others? Are people really more important, more valuable, than things . . . when the people are “other” people and the things are mine? Are human beings “naturally” self-directing co-operators or “naturally” pawns for wiser men to move?

It is important to make conscious decisions about what we believe are the answers to these questions, since, in a world of global contacts, not a single culture on earth is free of attitudes and practices that contradict the values it professes. Americans are not automatically imbued with the conviction that the principles upon which our nation was conceived and to which it was dedicated are valid as principles of action in everyday life. The decision to keep a free land truly free is one that its citizens must consciously make from day to day.

#### **The effects of conscious choice**

Suppose we made the choice and taught American youth the essential value of our traditional Judaeo-Christian conception of the nature of man. Believing as I do in the inherent power of truth and also believing that the Judaeo-Christian idea of man is nearer the truth than any opposing idea, I think we would rear a generation of young people who would act on the assumption that since, in the sight of God, all men are equal, we can rightly do no less than hold them individually in respect. Think what this would mean in practical results. Do you gang up to shoot a man whom you really respect? Do you besmirch



his character or charge him with a crime unless you have justification in the form of reliable proof? Do you define for him a "proper" place and by weight of your power "keep him in it"? Do you use him as a means for furthering your interests, however high-minded those interests may sound as you state them?

### ***The family of man***

*Consider one other choice.* Is our world one world under God, or is our nation alone under God while every other nation, in lesser or greater degree, is under the devil? Our choice between these two positions matters desperately for the future. Considering the human race to belong to one family does not, alas, preclude the possibility of internecine strife. Family feuds have a bitterness all their own. They are, however, different in quality from feuds between different species. Forces are often at work to help mitigate the bitterness of men who know that they are fighting their own kith and kin.

Most of us have been taught within our lifetime that Germans are Huns, brutes, blood-thirsty villains—and essential colleagues in the defense of our way of life against perilous threats! We have learned that the Japanese are fanatic, inhuman, power-mad "yellow devils"—and that Japan is a pivotal state for the arc of free Asia, our indispensable ally in a crucial ideological and political struggle! I cite these shifts in conviction not to question the accuracy of either position, or to minimize the sincerity of spokesmen for either. I mention them to suggest that it is unlikely that a globe can be permanently divided into two camps which will for all time and eternity be located geographically in two distinct areas.

### ***No tensions are insoluble***

Mankind struggles against "principalities and powers, the forces of evil everywhere." These forces do not stay put, nor can they be conveniently identified with one or another group of people. They are common

to mankind, which shares so many traits that history lends credence to the belief that no tensions between peoples are permanent, inevitable or insoluble.

Suppose we accept the notion that some men are of "lesser breeds without the law." This makes a difference both in our way of dealing with them and in their response to our behavior. But now the revolutionary idea that men are all equal before the Creator of the universe has caught fire in every land where it's spark has been carried. Yesterday's "lesser breeds" are no longer prepared to accept inferior status. They recognize the dynamic truth of the concept to which we give lip service, a concept making of the globe one world populated by one human family.

### ***The effort to direct change***

In summary and conclusion, let me repeat that we live in a world of increasing contacts, and of multiple practices and values which are often contradictory. There is no likelihood in the foreseeable future that these contacts will diminish—unless we are parties to wholesale destruction involving all of them. Choices are thrust upon us all with greater and greater frequency. Even if we would, we cannot protect our children from the necessity of making choices. Yet, they are not truly free to choose unless they can foresee the probable consequences of their choosing, and unless, too, they have set up a standard toward which they will try to direct change.

### ***The need of basic inquiries***

We fail them tragically if we do not concern ourselves and them with basic inquiries into our own nature and that of our world. For while convictions about a few great ultimates will not solve our daily or perennial problems, such intellectual and ethical objectives will help to keep the lesser items in proper and manageable perspective. So equipped and so taught, our sons and daughters will not fear to face the future.

# Adjustment—its uses and dangers

How can we help our children  
distinguish between necessary adaptability and  
mere compliance with mass values?

**I**t is perhaps not unreasonable that after a while a psychiatrist should come to look on the world as one large clinic and its people as so many cases of conflict and disharmony. This is, obviously, a jaundiced perspective, and a psychiatrist must, it seems to me, be careful that his concern with the inner worlds of doubt and anxiety doesn't completely distort his image of those other worlds where adequacy, success and fulfillment are possible.

I am going to discuss here, admittedly from a psychiatrist's special perspective, the concept of adjustment and a few of the questions that arise from any consideration of this vast and complicated problem.

Adjustment is a primary need for all people (for all animals, too, for that matter) if they are to survive. The development of the human hand was a superb effort at adjustment; it has been called "the adaptation to end all adaptations." Then there is the process which goes on constantly in the human body to achieve and maintain an effective level of functioning. This process is responsible for a truly amazing array of adaptive changes, many of which go on in the body entirely without the individual's participation or awareness.

Psychologically as well as biologically,

beginning at birth, the individual is required constantly to struggle toward an adaptive level which will permit him to survive and to find a suitable place in the society in which he lives: more broadly defined, to be psychologically "well," equating illness for the moment with "maladjustment."

This involves me in some semantic problems, and we had better stop a moment for a few definitions. It is, of course, an oversimplification to speak of mental health as the equivalent of adjustment. But most attempts to define mental health more precisely leave much to be desired.

Elsewhere when I have discussed the difficulty of defining emotional adjustment, I have said that perhaps one can describe a well-adjusted person simply as one who holds a job, does not get into trouble with the law, has a reasonably good marriage, enjoys the usual leisure time pursuits commonly available to his group, and is free of anxiety and symptoms which would prevent fulfillment of one's usual round of duties and commitments.<sup>1</sup> If this seems

<sup>1</sup> "The Neuroses; in Mental Health in the United States." By Sol Wiener Ginsburg, M.D. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Philadelphia, 1953.



pretty vague and ill-defined I can only assure you it is no more so than many more elaborate efforts; if it seems full of value judgments, I acknowledge this freely and would like to emphasize that it is just this that makes adjustment a fairly tenuous criterion for any estimate of well being.

Adjustment itself has by now become a highly regarded value in our culture, along with happiness, success, fun, mental health, and others. But it is time to ask: who adjusts to what and according to whose standards and values; under what conditions is adjustment a strength and when is it only a pleasant term for the weakness of too easy and uncritical compliance; are all mavericks, crusaders and their unfortunately diminishing like, inevitably to be considered maladjusted and is that necessarily something bad and to be avoided?

Marie Jahoda tells of a young man in her native town of Marienthal who found himself at the depth of the depression unemployed and presumably unemployable. Thoroughly discouraged, he decided to take advantage of the fact that in jail the prisoners were offered fairly adequate vocational training. He committed a variety of lesser crimes, found himself in jail, and learned to be an electrician. Armed with his new skill he went to a nearby city and got a job. Jahoda adds, somewhat plaintively, "It is at least a moot question whether his rebellion was mentally not more healthy than the resignation of his elders,"<sup>2</sup> a question which neither she nor I can properly answer.

#### **Adjustment—a top value?**

The importance of discussing what we mean by adjustment is underscored by the frequency with which we hear people labelled as "maladjusted," a tag usually meant to imply that such a person is not only "out of step" but neurotic, sick, and a drain on society. This is curiously and unhappily even more common when children,

and especially adolescents, are discussed, as if adjustment had become a top value and its absence a sure sign of trouble at hand or ahead. Now, to be sure, with young children especially, certain adjustments or conformities are necessary and need to be learned and adhered to without any ifs, and, or buts. A child must learn the dangers of fire, exposed heights, oncoming cars, etc., and I always feel free to tell troubled parents who ask me about such situations that they should not hesitate to take matters into their own hands even if it means applying said hand to the seat of Johnny's pants.

#### **The contributions of the "maladjusted"**

But beyond such elementary instances, adjustment must always be thought of in relative terms: in terms of who and when and where and under what circumstances, unless we are willing simply to enshrine conformity and never calculate its dangers to the individual and to society. To settle for conformity is to deny the enormous contributions to our world of the non-conformist, the unusual, the maladjusted. We are grateful for such contributions made throughout recorded history and often revere the memory of those who made them, but we seldom have room in our tight little world for the non-conformists around us, especially those in our own homes.

Perhaps my favorite illustration of the relative nature of adjustment is Eric Hoffer, the author of the highly praised *The True Believer*.<sup>3</sup> His life story is well known, but will bear repeating. In his words, "I had no schooling. I was practically blind up to the age of fifteen. When my eyesight came back, I was seized with an enormous hunger for the printed word." Although no clinical data are available, it is reasonable to assume that his blindness was emotionally induced.

Now middle aged, Hoffer spent ten years as a migrant worker and since 1943 has

<sup>2</sup> *Toward a Social Psychology of Mental Health; in Problems of Infancy and Childhood*. By Marie Jahoda. Macy Foundation; New York, 1950.

<sup>3</sup> *The True Believer*. By Eric Hoffer. Harper; New York, 1951.

worked as a part-time longshoreman. He is determined to remain poor, seeking only to earn enough for his modest daily needs. Entirely self taught, he has now written two interesting and significant books. He lives a tranquil life working for his keep on the docks—an unlikely job for a student—and spending the rest of his time studying and writing—certainly unlikely leisure time pursuits for a longshoreman.

In posing the question of Hoffer's "adjustment," I ask what is perhaps an irrelevant question but one certainly most difficult to answer. To some people his behavior is surely "abnormal," but who is truly privileged to pass such judgment? And if we would agree to call it abnormal, must we not allow that some very fine and creative things may crop up within that category?

#### **Further illustrations**

I would like to take two further illustrations of this point about adjustment, these from my practice. Some years ago a boy was brought to me because he was failing at school. This boy came from an economically secure home, conservative and eminently correct by every upper class suburban criterion. The greater, therefore, the parents' horror and dismay when he announced that he wanted to be a "dirt farmer" (which he emphasized when he rejected his father's "gentleman farmer" compromise). This desire to be a farmer, he explained to me, was the reason for his truancy and general misbehavior in school and his surliness and hostility at home. He wanted to flunk; he wanted to get away from the cadillacs, and the cocktail parties and the horrible questions: how do you like school? Will you be going to Princeton like your dad? Etc., etc.

He was everything his parents were not: simple, unaffected, devotedly loyal to a group of boys of lesser means with whom he shared a love for dogs and bird watching and other seemingly eccentric interests. He truly loved the earth, and found great joy in the unfolding of Spring and the new

arrival of the flowers and the orderly arrangement of the crops in his vegetable patch. I might add, to illustrate the relative standards by which these things are weighed, that during the war, when this vegetable garden was put in as a patriotic duty, his childish devotion to his assigned chores was called "cute," and he was rewarded as a little patriot. But, so to speak, the war was over. . .

Along about my fifth session with him it suddenly occurred to me (and in retrospect it seems I was woefully slow in understanding) that what purported to be therapy was in essence an effort to get him to accept his family's value system and their way of life. I'll never forget the look of joy on that boy's face when I said I thought he didn't need psychiatric care and that I would talk with his parents about his ambitions. I must say I have rarely had it easier; arrangements were made for him to live with a farm family they knew and go to a country high school. When he graduated he went to an agricultural school in the middle west, and if messages scribbled on Christmas greetings are any index, I'm sure he's steady on the course to the good life as a farmer.

#### **"Normal" by whose standards?**

The second example is that of a college girl of eighteen who consulted me some years ago in a mild but handicapping depression. She was the fourth of five children in a family that made Sanger's Circus seem dull and average. I must not allow myself more than a few recollections of the Joneses; of all the families with whom I have dealt they are perhaps the most vivid. Talented, energetic, enormously endowed physically and mentally, creative, unfettered, they all leapt from achievement to achievement. Everyone painted, read exhaustively, played a musical instrument, fenced, hunted, and swam, wherever possible, in the nude. This last fact will illustrate a part of what I mean. Ann, my patient, never could adjust, not to the nude swimming itself but to its *necessity*, and re-



membered with bitter tears her humiliation on an occasion when her father teased her unmercifully and accused her of having a middle class mind. This happened because she refused to swim at all when she first had a young man guest, knowing she would look and be ludicrous in a bathing suit in the midst of all this bounty of nakedness. Her "unusualness" did not end there: she was tone deaf; she chose to attend a traditional girls' college; she joined a sorority; and she became a leader in the Christian Fellowship movement at school. She was actually a quite gifted, warmhearted child. Her maladjustment was more apparent than real and could only be estimated at all as maladjustment if one accepted, as she had, her family's extraordinary standards and behavior as the norm.

#### **Fear of deviations**

I realize, of course, that these are rather extreme examples. Yet I believe that they have the quality and flavor of the everyday problems and maladjustments of quite ordinary youngsters. Such conflicts frequently arise around the question of the adolescent's occupation preferences, where the parents' goals and ambitions so often collide with a youngster's interests and values. Similarly, old world or "old hat" ideas about such things as clothes, dating, late hours, avocational interests, are constant sources of difference, often catalogued as maladjustments. I believe that we tend to overemphasize these much less extreme forms of self-expression, and, armed with false values and unreal expectations, interpret them only too often as clinically significant forms of behavior. In other words, we look on them as evidences of being "sick."

To be sure, there are many homes where secure parents accept their youngsters' idiosyncrasies with amused tolerance and even prideful understanding. It is my feeling (and I admit that I have no statistics to prove this) that this is less frequent today, that by and large we are not as tolerant of difference as we once were, and that

there is less encouragement for the brave, adventurous living that used to be considered the American way. And it is likely that we in psychiatry have contributed to this by constantly pointing out the "meanings" of behavior. We have been more concerned with suggesting the dangers that lurk in deviations from presumed norms than with emphasizing the wide range of differences that "normal" rightly must include, or the usually transitory nature of many of these "abnormal" forms of behavior.

A sensible parent doesn't want his child to adjust *all* the time; that might make a boy a "sissy," or a girl a nobody, a wallflower—and what parent wants such a fate for his children? But on the other hand, and understandably so, no parent wants his child's rebellion to go so far as to make him a social outcast, or, even worse, to get him into trouble at school or with the law. And we seem to have alerted parents to these potential dangers much too thoroughly.

In a sense it is really a matter of values, and values may be subtly manipulated by words. Bertrand Russell has called attention to the possibility of conjugating value-weighted adjectives in such form as:

1. I am firm.
2. You are obstinate.
3. He is a pigheaded fool.

As Felix Cohen pointed out in a brilliant essay, from which the following quotation was taken, "Almost any human characteristic can be described in honorific or in pejorative terms," and I quote a few of his wonderful illustrations: discreet, cautious, cowardly; loyal, obedient, slavish; kind, soft, mawkish; youthful, young, immature. It depends on who calls the tune and about whom. And it is so easy to be frightened by words. No sensible parent wants his youngster to be a spendthrift but he insists that he be generous; immature is a horror word, young a pleasant and complimentary one; humanitarian laudable, do-gooder derogatory.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *The Reconstruction of Hidden Value Judgments in Symbols and Values*. By Felix Cohen. Harper; New York, 1954.

### **Competition vs. compromise**

Another way to look at this problem is as a struggle between competition and compromise. Competition is instinctive in man; we must learn to compete against the physical environment, against real and symbolic rivals, in school, in business, in romantic conquests—everywhere. As Highet says, "Competition is a natural instinct in the young. Listen to them outshouting and outboasting one another when they are having fun. Watch the innumerable games and stunts which they enjoy, all blended between cooperation and competition, team spirit and rivalry. Think of the more serious competition practiced by adults not only in business and in politics, but in personal display (house, furniture, clothes, cars, and other gadgets), in the craving for publicity and in the innumerable spectator sports on which we spend so many hours and so much money."<sup>5</sup>

It is the control, regulation, and discipline of this competitive need which call for compromise. Either competition or compromise or both in excess can lead to difficulties: the first to a view of life which requires one always to win, always to be better, to do better, to get the other fellow down; the second, to an acceptance of compromise and conformity as guiding principles leading to a readiness to yield on anything to anyone so long as one has "peace and quiet." A good adjustment lies somewhere in between, depending on what may be involved and under what circumstances.

### **The difficult "middle way"**

But parents understandably find it difficult to help their children hew to the middle of the road that is considered good adjustment. In the first place, they have been made over-sensitive by the well publicized and often contradictory statements of presumed experts and by widely held group mores. Generally speaking, American par-

ents are a little frightened by the image of a child as an "intellectual," especially these days when we live in a climate of heightened anti-intellectualism. Despite all the abundant evidence around us that intellectual achievement is not necessarily an inevitable concomitant of sissiness, parents rather dread it and question the wisdom of such unworldly preoccupations—do the rewards balance the hazards? Naturally this problem of goals and rewards plays an important role in any parent's estimate of the "normalcy" of his youngster; for the father who dreams of his boy as an Ivy League tackle there is small satisfaction in the news that he was elected editor-in-chief of the senior monthly. And, of course, the other way around as well. Even the parent who rejoices in his youngster's intellectual attainments may understandably hope for that leaven of campus success that makes it easier to translate good grades into opportunities for top executive jobs.

### **Apprehensions about delinquency**

Increasingly, parents are apprehensive about adolescent behavior that was once considered typical mischief but is today equated with that dread term juvenile delinquency. The endless scare pieces; the constant exploitation of this theme by politicians with an eye to future elections, by well-meaning reformers of all hues, bringing in their tow psychiatrists and sociologists to "document" their prescriptions—these seem to me to make it almost inevitable that parents will over-react to the sort of transgression which in earlier years would have been passed by without notice, handled with a thrashing or even secretly bragged about.

Now I don't, of course, believe that this is the best of all possible worlds, or that, as almost always happens following great wars and social upheavals, there has not been a considerable increase in so-called delinquent behavior (the "so-called" merely indicates my doubts as to the wisdom of lumping together all sorts of behavioral deviations and labeling them with a term

<sup>5</sup> *The Art of Teaching*. By Gilbert Highet. Knopf; New York, 1954.



as approbrious as "delinquent"). And I believe every intelligent step should be taken to study this problem with care and discretion, but in the clinic and in the social laboratory rather than in the scare headlines of the papers. Each of us must recoil with horror at crimes involving youngsters such as those heedless and inscrutable murders in Brooklyn, but there is no need to translate them into such immediacy that every parent finds a potential danger in the most insignificant adolescent transgression. A recent newspaper article, written to reassure parents, described six or eight perfectly wonderful American kids;<sup>6</sup> it was curious to hear it criticized for not selecting "typical" kids, as though the tragic kids from Brooklyn were in any sense typical.

What I have been trying to say is embarrassingly simple. I believe we have enshrined, along with other shibboleths of the same kind, the notions of normalcy and adjustment-conformity. At the same time we have apparently failed to reckon the cost both to the individual and to society of this willingness, indeed eagerness, to settle for a lowest-common-denominator estimate of behavior. In the individual such drives for conformity lead to restrictions in human expressiveness and performance. Further, they contribute to the development of hostile, authoritarian approaches to people, and are apt to catalyze prejudice.

#### Political results

We can see the results in the political world today all too clearly. I do not want to compress a highly complicated matter into a sentence or two and risk a misunderstanding. But one needs only to see day by day the retribution visited on individuals for the slightest deviation from a political norm imposed in the name of security, but inflicted by rigid conformists terrified by the merest shadow of deviation. As Learned Hand has expressed so beautifully in his brilliant essay on liberty, "My thesis is that any organization of society which de-

## Family Life workshop

A Summer Workshop on family life education and evaluation will be held in Chicago, August 1-19, 1955, under the auspices of the Family Study Center of the University of Chicago. Open to teachers, social workers and counselors in the field of family living, the Workshop will acquaint them with new techniques developed for family life education programs and courses, and set up procedures for evaluating these new methods. For full information write: Eugene Litwak, Assistant Director, Family Study Center, The University of Chicago, 5757 Drexel Avenue, Chicago 37, Ill.

#### Attention:

##### All teachers and librarians

Still available in limited quantities, Fall 1954 issue of CHILD STUDY magazine—*Permissiveness Re-examined*. Valuable, timely reference. 65¢ per copy.

presses free and spontaneous meddling is on the decline, however showy its immediate spoils; I maintain that in such a society liberty is gone, little as its members know it; that the Nirvana of the individual is too high a price for a collective paradise . . . our collective fate in the end depends upon the irrepressible fertility of the individual and the finality of what he chooses to call good."<sup>7</sup>

#### Patience, not panic

Although I have not tried to offer a remedy and could not even if I had space, I should like only to suggest to parents and others that we try to take it easy in our application of complicated psychological-ethical standards to living people, especially youngsters. I should like to believe that patience, sympathy, love, understanding, and, for that matter, time itself, will help resolve many a problem; and to remind you that our country began and grew strong in the beliefs and actions of non-conformist individuals who were not afraid.

<sup>6</sup> "U.S. Kids are O.K." *This Week Magazine*, February 27, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> *The Spirit of Liberty*. By Learned Hand. Knopf; New York, 1952.

# The adolescent and his parents: shifting perspectives

By Martin H. Stein, M.D.

In adolescence, the needs for freedom and guidance are in delicate balance. The parent who can meet both builds for a rewarding relationship in the future

To be the parent of an adolescent child is an important and sometimes disturbing experience, but one we have not as yet understood very completely. This is not for lack of effort. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of articles on adolescence, scientific and popular, published every year. Adolescent delinquency, sexual problems, social adjustment and education are exhaustively and often exhaustingly discussed. Yet most parents regard the rearing of an adolescent child as a matter of concern, even to the point of conscious worry.

This anxiety, for once, cannot be ascribed merely to the self-consciousness of our society since it is quite widespread in all familiar cultures, and historically is probably very old. Certainly it was manifested by the Athenians who accused Socrates of corrupting their youth, and even primitive parents have expressed similar anxieties through their attention to the morals of adolescents and the institution of initiation ceremonies and stern taboos affecting this age group.

There is certainly an age-old conviction that the devil is particularly interested in teenagers. I should like to discuss some of the reasons for this belief and to outline a few of the areas in which our understanding may be improved.

Adolescence is, in itself, a process which is complicated and difficult to comprehend. It is not even easy to agree on a simple definition of the term, many people using it as if it were synonymous with immaturity or neurotic character disturbance, while others regard it as a chronologically distinct period of life. Adolescence is best defined as a phase of growth, beginning with the physical and emotional changes of puberty, and ending when the individual has attained maximum physical growth and some sort of stable character structure. This "settled" state implies neither a static rigidity of character, nor the attainment of true maturity or mental health. The close of adolescence may be marked by the appearance of a very mature young adult, free of serious symptoms and ready for useful work and happy marriage; or the young adult may be disturbed, incapable of work and sexually maladjusted. In that case he is a sick adult, not an adolescent.

Adolescence is characterized most accurately, therefore, by its *constant* change and growth. The adolescent has the ability to be a different kind of person from month to month, or even from day to day. There appear to be few limits to plasticity of character and behavior, and no certain way to predict these changes. A 13-year-old girl may seem a gawky child one day, and a



self-possessed young woman the same evening. There are constant fluctuations from feminine crushes to infatuations with boys, from the professing of noble, perhaps religious, ideals, to cynical expressions of greed and promiscuity.

This constant shifting is characteristic of "normal" adolescents, but does not generally appear in any but the most unstable of adults. It offers the first serious problem to the parents who, as adults, have to some extent established stable and more or less permanent, highly complex and individual methods of dealing with both external and internal conflicts. They have accomplished this with great effort, very often at the expense of a capacity for understanding and tolerating instability in others.

#### **The blurring of adult memories**

It is very characteristic of adults, not only to have rejected the intense feelings and wild ideas of their own youth, but even more to have succeeded in forgetting them. Even when we remember the facts, we succeed in divorcing them from the emotions originally associated with them: we do not really remember *ourselves* in that state of growth. Very often we don't really want to, especially when it is our early adolescence that is concerned. Looking at an old photograph of a gawky boy or girl in the early teens, and being informed that this callow and badly dressed creature was oneself, is not generally a happy experience. There is little of the sweet nostalgia or eager recognition we experience when we recognize ourselves in late adolescence, proudly graduating from high school or wielding a tennis racquet with evident skill. These older adolescents are fine, familiar people we'd like to know (and perhaps wish we could be once again!). To the young adolescent, on the contrary, we have become strangers, at our own request.

This purposeful, if quite unconscious, blurring of memories of ourselves as adolescents, may be explained partly by the nature of the growth process which goes

on in young people at the onset of this period. When we try to recall, which we rarely do, and imagine what it would be like to grow several inches over a summer, to develop a different body structure, with hair in new places, and new genital size and sensation, we are likely to be appalled by the idea. Such a change would precipitate severe anxiety in an adult: we hesitate to think of what it must have been like then to undergo such a transfiguration.

These changes in body structure and glandular function are a source of great internal turmoil to the adolescent, although, to some extent, the worry is balanced by pride in the approach of maturity and the knowledge that the same things are happening to others of the same age. Both anxiety and pride are reawakened in the parents also, on two levels. First, they react to their child's emotional acceptance of these new developments. Second, they react to older feelings, derived from their own puberty, which may be reawakened by this new experience. If the adult has never solved his own pubertal conflicts with any success, or if he has done so at too great an expense in terms of emotional flexibility, he is likely to feel great anxiety in connection with his child's sexual activity, menstruation, self-consciousness and other phenomena, while more fortunate parents take them more easily.

#### **Old conflicts, new answers**

But the adolescent is doing more than simply growing and maturing. He is experiencing with heightened intensity conflicts which seemed to be more or less solved when he was five or six. What shall he do with his attachment to each of his parents? How can he ever give them up, and why should he? How can he control his impulses, and why? Whom should he resemble and what is his identity to be?

All of these questions must be answered by the adolescent all over again, with new purposes and within a new framework, and they must be met in such a way that he is eventually prepared for adult life in

his society. In ideal terms, he must be able to fall in love, to marry and support a stable family, and to be independent of his parents both emotionally and economically.

### ***The drive for independence***

The parents are faced, therefore, with the problem of allowing the adolescent to achieve this personal independence, and of controlling their own natural, if reprehensible, desires to retain the child they have always loved. It is not easy for many mothers and fathers to yield up a child whom they have supported and adored to some undeserving outsider, in return for the somewhat grudging promise of being allowed to act as emergency baby sitters in a few years. The sacrifice is a real one, and the rewards uncertain, although the promise of grandchildren is more important in enabling parents to give their young people independence than most of us have realized.

Still, if rearing an adolescent were simply a matter of waiting, and yielding to the demands of time, most parents would have an easier task than in fact they do. Just having an adolescent in the house requires constant understanding and energy. Children in this phase are particularly in need of guidance—even, sometimes, of interference. Adolescents do strange things, disturbing to themselves and to others. They need help from their parents, the same parents whom they accuse regularly, and accurately, of failing to understand them. We not only suffer from our own defects in understanding adolescent children, but must also cope with the adolescent's difficulty in communicating with us.

### ***Difficulty in communicating***

The child has several reasons for not telling his parents what he is troubled about, even though he may need and demand help. First, his ideas and feelings may be associated with such shame that he could not communicate them to any adult. Second, he may not be aware of

them himself, never having recognized them, or having pushed them out of consciousness. Last, his attempt to break away from his parents, to become a man, may mean that he feels he can no longer confide in his parents, no matter how loving and trustworthy they are. The adults are now in a dilemma. So often the child who needs help most is precisely the one who cannot confide easily. Paradoxically, this is also apt to be the state of affairs confronting the healthiest child and the wisest parents. It is by no means certain that the child who confides very readily in the parent, or the parent who understands accurately (or thinks he does) everything that goes on in the child, will be the most fortunate in this process of developing maturity and independence.

I do not, of course, mean to imply that deceit by children, or complete misunderstanding by parents is either healthy or desirable. Rather, I would emphasize that we must accept some limitations of communication between the generations as part of growth.

### ***Rivalry between the generations***

As the child grows further into adolescence, the parents experience other paradoxical reactions. The great energy and the developing attractiveness of the child precipitate complex emotions in the parents. It is a great source of fatherly pride to have one's son become a tall and handsome athlete; but it may cause stirrings of unhappiness in the man who realizes that his son is stronger and better-looking than he is. How does it feel to have young people visit one's house, and consider one too old to be interesting? It is particularly those parents who cannot relinquish their own youth who are likely to find themselves, unhappily, rivals of their adolescent children. The extreme cases of mothers who deliberately outshine and humiliate their daughters, and seduce their young men, are fortunately few; but perhaps every mother experiences a little of the feeling of envy that this suggests. Fathers are more likely to experience



and react to the son's rivalry in terms of occupational ambitions, but the basic emotions of sexual rivalry are the same. It takes considerable maturity to allow oneself to be surpassed and dated, and this may not come gracefully to parents who lack other resources in their love for each other, their work or other interests. When the adolescence of children corresponds (as it often does these days) with the middle age of the parents, the latter may find it hard to suffer so many losses at once.

#### **Parental ambitions**

The child's growing independence has other aspects which affect parents in various and sometimes complex ways. One of these is the emergence of vocational interests—or the lack of them. Both can be disturbing to adults. We want our children to develop skills which will make them happy, and will at least end their status as economic burdens. In these days, parents are not so frank in their hope that children will eventually support them in their old age, yet this often quite realistic wish must be an important element in the parents' reaction to a child's career. If the son of hard working and poor parents decides to enter a field requiring expensive training with very little financial reward, it is not unnatural for the parents to object. The attaining of independence, an important emotional objective for the child, does not require that the parents' needs may be neglected.

Parents' reactions are sometimes deeper and more involved, however, than the simple wish for the child's success or their own future security. Unsatisfied and perhaps unrecognized parental ambitions may be reawakened by the child, so that the father may attempt, quite unconsciously, to push the son toward the medical career he missed, or the mother may try to recapture her own youthful ambitions through her daughter's career as an actress or dancer. When external circumstances are favorable, when the parents and children have been easy and happy with one another

in the past, and when the child has adequate interest and ability, such unrecognized influences may be of great value. Much of the strength of modern American life, as well as a few of its problems, is due to such attempts to have the children live out their parents' daydreams of glory and worldly success. But if the pressure impairs the child's needs for independence, if it is motivated largely by rivalry or by shoddy social values, and if the child is regarded as a pawn to be used for the greater glory of the parents, tragedy may result. Permanent ruptures between child and parent may occur—or worse, a lasting and bitterly hostile dependence.

#### **Affection on a new level**

Simultaneously, the young person must establish the capacity for stable and affectionate sexual relationships in which his own family is not involved. This is not as easy as it sounds, since the child has such strong ties to his parents at puberty that his first sexual daydreams involve his parents in some sort of disguise, generally a very effective one. The succession of coldness and affection, the series of infatuations and crushes are all skirmishes in the battle to achieve independence in this respect, to shift entirely the bulk of one's love to an outsider. Sometimes there are even phases in which the adolescent feels that he loves no one at all in the whole world, and is loved by no one. We must hope that our children will be successful in withdrawing their infantile love from us, to be able to love and marry as mature adults. We may take comfort in the thought that we will be compensated for the loss of the child's love and dependence when we regain his love and affection on a new level, a love which is generally less intense, far steadier and freer of conflicts.

Meanwhile, the knowledge that it's all supposed to be for the best is inadequate comfort for the baffled parents, especially when old sexual conflicts and rivalries are reactivated in them by the fact that a son or daughter is growing up. A young girl's

menstruation may have profoundly disturbing effects on her mother, whose acceptance of her own femininity may have been all too uncertain. The presence of an adolescent son or daughter may lead to vague anxieties or even serious conflicts in a father whose image of himself as a sexually ineffective young man has never been resolved by maturity. These factors make it difficult for parents to establish discipline which is both fair and effective, since on the one hand they unconsciously wish to experience sexual excitement vicariously through the child, and on the other hand seek to prevent the emergence of such threatening fantasies by putting severe restrictions on the child's activities.

#### **Adolescent intellectuality**

In a society like ours, in which intellectual achievement is likely to be highly valued, rivalry appears in this area, too. The parent who over-values intellect, and inwardly is very unsure of his ability to hold his own, is especially apt to react to the adolescent's intelligence with envy and anxiety. True, the adolescent is often brilliant, amazingly quick in his understanding and capable of philosophical and mathematical abstractions of the most impressive sort. This intelligence is worthy of respect, but it is not, and cannot be, equivalent to the mature wisdom of the adult—some adults, at any rate. In this phase it is, for all its power, primarily a defense, a method the adolescent develops to deal with the overwhelming strength of the urges he experiences. Remarkable as this intelligence is, it leads, with few exceptions, to no new schools of philosophy, and no important

changes in the structure of science, which are the products, for the most part, of older, less spectacular intellects. It is, therefore, not so entirely unreasonable that the brightest age group in our society in terms of learning speed and perception is denied the privilege of voting, which is granted to all but the most deficient adults.

The wise parent will take pride in his child's intelligence, but he need not overestimate it, nor leave the child without necessary guidance and advice. A very bright child may be helped in vital ways by a relatively uneducated parent of mediocre intelligence, who is nevertheless emotionally mature and experienced.

#### **Defiance of authority**

Defiance of authority, and lawlessness, the social manifestations of the adolescent's aggressive strivings, likewise produce varying reactions in the adult. Most people today accept, or try to accept, the dictum that rebellion is a necessary stage in adolescent development. Nevertheless, the parent cannot take it so lightly. For one thing, it is hard to know where it will end and how destructive it may be. Moreover, rebellion induces anxiety in the child himself, often to the point of overwhelming guilt. Perception of this in turn causes concern in even the most understanding and secure of parents.

There is a further reason why lawless behavior by adolescents evokes a shocked response in adults, who tolerate with greater equanimity the corrupt practices and major wars of adult groups. Ruth Eissler has pointed out that such emotionality is part of the adult's unconscious identification with the violent behavior of the adolescent, a frightening glimpse of the youthful passions which were subdued with much difficulty in the earlier phases of one's own life. Adolescent crime or social misbehavior evokes excitement and guilt in the adult, resulting in a demand for suppressive punishment rather than a useful search for causes and remedies. If adults were more understanding of and less shocked by

#### **Casework and family life education**

"Family Life Education as a Service of the Casework Agency," by Mrs. Aline B. Auerbach of the CSAA staff, appeared in the Spring 1955 issue of *The Jewish Social Service Quarterly*. This paper, originally presented at the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, in Philadelphia, May, 1954, will be available from CSAA in reprint form at 15¢ per copy.



adolescent violence, they might be able to act with greater firmness and less cruelty—and get better results.

Delinquency among adolescents is unquestionably serious and widespread. Statistics in this field, however, are generally accepted uncritically, without sufficient study of their sources and interpretation. Many, perhaps most, adults will accept rising figures for adolescent crime as an index of increasing violence of behavior. We may forget that such reports are of very recent origin, are extremely complicated, and based on variable and often uncertain criteria. They may be presented with frankly political (though praiseworthy) motives.

#### **A perspective: *Romeo and Juliet***

We are evidently eager to believe our children are criminals, and ready to accept delinquency as a modern phenomenon. We attain a better perspective by considering the comments on similar situations in other times made by such shrewd observers as Fielding, Smollet, Dickens, and many others. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is from this point of view a remarkable commentary on the youth of his and other days. Romeo is sick with love for Rosaline one day, and that same evening forsakes her for another pretty adolescent named Juliet, whom he has seen briefly at a dance. This is characteristic only of the teenager. Romeo's companions, too, constituted a true adolescent gang, rather more homicidal than most, but demonstrating the characteristic horseplay, loyalty and belligerence of its modern counterparts. Their acts were so serious that the Grand Duke, the chief magistrate of Verona, implied punishment of the parents, too, if they failed to control their children. This is a very modern touch, indeed!

Juliet, age 14, might also have been a modern girl. Her charming infatuation for the forbidden boy, her estrangement from her parents and her refusal to obey, are all very familiar to us. There is a magnificent scene between father and daughter which is the prototype of all such episodes—angry

father and rebellious daughter, loving each other dearly, yet doomed to misunderstanding, violence and rebellion.

It is not strange that this quite imperfect play should have survived to charm many generations of mature adults. It portrays the impetuous, perhaps foolish, innately beautiful years about which we are both nostalgic and anxious.

Fortunately, adolescence leads somewhere, and neither its charms nor its characteristic disturbances last forever. The shifting identifications (from gangster to hero, from pampered princess to Florence Nightingale) lead eventually to the ability to regard oneself as a well defined person, distinct from one's parents and without the need to be at war with them. The intellectuality of the adolescent becomes the inquisitive intelligence and experienced wisdom of the adult, once again a means of dealing with the outside world as well as with oneself.

The fluid and impetuous sexuality of the child leads to more consistent expressions of heterosexual love and eventually to stable marriage. The aggressive energies that were expressed in horseplay, rebellion or gang activity, become the driving force of the executive, lawyer, laborer, housewife or actress.

#### **The eternal miracle**

Many things can go wrong with this crucial process of adolescence. Nevertheless, most people live through this hectic and dramatic phase of their lives, worrying, delighting and provoking their parents; with perpetual surprise, we realize that somehow the great majority have grown into adults who are physically, intellectually and emotionally the equal of their parents, if not their superiors. Almost miraculously, it might seem, they have even evolved a moral structure, as people did in earlier generations.

After talking about the effect of adolescents on their parents, one generally is expected to say something new about the best ways for parents to meet such problems. It

is very difficult to do so, and still avoid the clichés which have never been very useful as guides to the perplexed parent.

It is certainly of value for parents to accept adolescence as a period in which all sorts of changes and experiments within the personality are desirable and necessary. We must try to relinquish our adult ideal of uncomplicated, purely forward development, and treat the crude, often regressive characteristics of our children with some understanding.

Further, we must recognize the right of the adolescent child to withdraw his love and admiration from his parents for *temporary* periods. Better now than later, and for good!

#### **When to blow the whistle**

The adolescent needs help, often more desperately than the ten-year-old. But the parent is in the position of the lifeguard who must know when to blow the whistle and when to rush to the rescue—or when to allow the swimmer to save himself. Certainly reasonable discipline and attention to health are just as necessary now as they were earlier in life. The adolescent, no matter how self-reliant, gains an incalculable advantage from a family which has inner integrity and decency, and a set of standards which are morally defensible. And there is no harm in letting him know about them!

It is difficult to be more specific. Adoles-

cence, by its very nature, does not lend itself readily to generalization or rules of thumb. Moreover, for reasons already discussed in part (its protean character, the defects of communication between adolescent and adult, and our own blind spots and amnesias) we—and I include the best informed adults—understand very little of the *inner workings* of adolescent personalities. We have masses of facts, observations and statistics, but we lack a deep understanding, a body of theory or metapsychology of adolescence. This is a field of research yet to be adequately studied.

Adolescence is a fascinating process, and it is a profound experience to have the responsibility of an adolescent child. Every parent makes mistakes, but what adolescent could tolerate a parent who was never wrong? Ideally, this should be a maturing experience for the parent, too, who, in living with his child, has the precious second chance of seeing how he became an adult himself.

#### **UNICEF recreation kit**

*Understanding our Neighbors*, a new UNICEF recreation program kit, will be of interest to all persons who plan youth programs. It contains information on the work of UNICEF, ideas for both indoor and outdoor activities, songs, games, folktales, customs and information about arts and crafts in five countries aided by UNICEF.

The kit sells for \$1.00 and may be obtained by writing to: U.S. Committee for UNICEF, Room 1860, United Nations, N. Y.



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The ideals of yesterday cannot be those of today or tomorrow. Each young person has to find his own "right way" toward objectives often quite different from those planned for him

# Steps toward adulthood

By Theresa Wolfson

**I**n discussing, as an economist, and as a parent, the impact of the young adult on his parents, I want first to try to present a picture of our world during the last quarter of a century. It helps to have a perspective—to consider the effect of this world upon us all. We have lived through a major depression and a war. We are now in the midst of a period of violent change in social and political values the world over. Adults are on the defensive about some fundamental assumptions of our economic, political and social way of life, and are extremely sensitive when their values are challenged either by another economic system or another person. Some of the challenges come from within the country, some come from outside.

For many years—in fact, even before the present cold war—we have been suffering from a conflict between the values we live by and the values we *say* we live by. Does a democracy provide equal opportunity for all young people to climb the occupational ladder? If it does, then why have sociologists and anthropologists written such books as *The Yankee Community*,<sup>1</sup> or *Elmtown's Youth*,<sup>2</sup> which describe the relation between class position and the educational

opportunities and economic outlook for young people?

Is our faith in the rights of the common man, our concern with freedom of speech, press, and right of assembly, selective? To the young adult in a quandary, the fact that we sometimes act in accordance with our beliefs and sometimes do not is confusing.

The adult may think of these problems as relative, knowing that to "grow up" is to accept the idea that life is neither black nor white. To the young person, however, full of hopes, aspirations and new-found learning, the winds of reality constantly challenge what he has learned and believed. The slow and painful disillusionment of the young adult turns to resentment against the older adults, particularly his parents, because they were the source of his first set of values—that set of values that disappointed him so, by proving imperfect and in need of revision.

We have, as a nation, achieved an outstanding record in the production of material goods. We have reached the enviable status of being one of the richest nations in the world. We have the further achievement of having over two million students in colleges, thirty million in high schools, and many more than that in the elementary schools. An increasing percentage of our

<sup>1</sup> *The Yankee City Series*. By W. Lloyd Warner and others. Yale University Press; New Haven 1942-47.

<sup>2</sup> *Elmtown's Youth*. By A. B. Hollingshead. Wiley; New York, 1949.

population is gainfully employed—over 61 million in the last census. We have built a host of devices to safeguard workers against economic insecurity: unemployment insurance, old age security, dismissal pay, fringe benefits. We have created measures of government control to safeguard industry and to eliminate some of the risks of free competition.

#### ***New values for our society***

The social sciences have trained psychologists who study the personal irritations responsible for bottlenecks in production or who attempt to fit the individual worker to the right job. Sociologists have applied their skills to the overcoming of irrational actions and prejudices among workers in industry or in corporations. Political scientists have studied our political framework in order to facilitate the social and political reform required by changing conditions. Spokesmen for the church have attempted to bridge the gap between an increasingly materialist world and the religious ideals and values which spring in part from an agricultural economy. But we have not set up values or ideals for an industrial society.

The young adult, in his eagerness to participate in the grownup world, senses the insecurity, the changing values, the hypocrisy. He finds comfort and security mostly in the world of his peers. Only here does he find the security of group approval and respect.

#### ***Inconsistencies in timing***

Our society has telescoped the rate of maturing, though not with any degree of consistency. At 18 a young man is considered mature enough to fight for the defense of his country although he does not have the privilege of the vote. At 16 he can work in almost every state in the union (except in hazardous industries), but he cannot inherit property until he has reached his legal majority. Our educational system has prolonged the period of childhood. At the same time, our knowl-

edge of health, medicine and public health has prolonged the life expectancy of the adult.

One of the fundamental challenges to the young adult is the conflict between youth and the older worker in the work-place. Trade unions have attempted to safeguard the older worker by giving him the security of the seniority principle. Some trade unions require long periods of apprenticeship for the younger worker before he can secure a man's wage and union citizenship. If the young adult looks for a job he is asked whether he has "experience." Yet, if the job is one that is likely to lead anywhere, it is difficult for him to secure the necessary experience. Whether the young adult has a high school education or a college education, the search for the first job frequently is full of frustration. Nothing in his educational background has prepared him for the rejections, the advice, the cold shoulder which he may meet. If his aspirations are high, the necessity for compromise hits him with all the more impact.

#### ***What kind of training?***

In addition to the gap between anticipation and realization, the young adult today is confronted with the effects of automation. If he has gone to a trade school to acquire a skill, by the time he reaches the labor market the entire trade may be revolutionized and he has lost his stock in trade. Recent manpower studies declare that we will need more skilled workers. We have no way of gauging how we shall train or vocationally guide the young adult worker. A few years ago, college students in large numbers prepared themselves for law, architecture, medicine. Today the lures are electronics, physics and industrial engineering. In June 1955 there will be 800,000 graduates of high schools and colleges looking for jobs. As the level of education rises, young adults are more interested in finding white collar employment. Not only is it a mark of social advancement; white collar work seems to change less rapidly. It is worth noting, however, that neither high



school graduates nor college students object to taking any kind of job while they are at school in order to give them the means to go out with the gang—or the girl—or whatever the current motive may be. A few days ago a young man in one of my classes explained, “I drive a truck in order to keep a car.”

### **Early marriages**

The urgency which the young adult feels about the forces—especially the threat of war—that are telescoping his life, is in part responsible for the present high rate of early marriages and the rising birth rate. For the young man and young woman marriage represents an answer to the need for physical and emotional fulfillment. Since the world is so full of uncertainty and insecurity, marriage becomes an island of fulfillment and safety in a dangerous sea of unfulfilled hopes. It is true that for the young woman marriage means a cessation of social adventure, a curtailment of moral excursions; but since statistics show a preponderance of females to males she, too, accepts marriage as a source of personal security. There is no longer any doubt about whether or not she will assume economic responsibility. Young women today work until their children are born.

Many young couples continue to live with their parents or may even be supported by them. It has become a natural thing to do in middle class families. The custom began during the last war, when the husband was in the army, and has since become quite generally accepted. The paradox which confronts these young adults who have achieved physical maturity but are subject to economic dependence and control from the parents, is indeed irritating no matter how tolerant and understanding everyone concerned may try to be. Middle class parents feel that they cannot stand by while their children undergo material privations. They help out with material gifts—but they expect returns, either in gratitude or the right to make decisions for the young adults.

I have tried so far to sketch the environment which surrounds the young adult—the shifting of values, the changes in the economic world, the disparity between what he learned in school about the world’s ideals, and the realities as he now finds them: a world of confusion and chaos compounded.

On this same earth live the parents. They, too, have had disillusioning experiences. They, too, are confused. To many parents the lives of their children represent a “second chance.” If a man hated being a butcher all his life—but stuck to his job because of his family—at least his children will become lawyers or doctors. This becomes his dream and aspiration—and driving force.

From being an economic asset in an earlier agricultural society, children are now—and have been for a long period—an economic burden. Some statistician has declared that bringing up a child to maturity represents an investment of \$20,000. In a money-oriented world many parents want to collect interest in the form of a fulfillment of their own aspirations. The parent hopes that his children will achieve success, status, prominence—anything that will enable the child to rise out of the anonymity of the mass. The child may be happy in his anonymity, he may want to be “left alone.” Prominence may mean more responsibilities which he does not want to assume—but the ambitions of the parent are all too frequently immoderate and insidious, for they are, after all, their unfulfilled aspirations!

### **Parents' ambivalence**

Parents of the young adult today, particularly middle class parents, have been influenced by an exaggerated psychology of permissiveness, and at the same time by a projection of some of their own dreams. When the teenager begins to assert his growing independence, when he expresses defiant opposition to parental controls, the parent becomes ambivalent, uncertain. He does not want his child to be subject to the

same rigid, Calvinistic standards that he, the parent, was. He wants the child to have fun, such as he himself wanted years ago. He wants his child to have experiences, adventures and a minimum of responsibility. Yet he also wants the child to be successful in a competitive world. These are the things the parent wanted for himself; surely these must be the things the child wants.

He has forgotten that no child is a complete extension of the parent, that he is the product of *two* parents and of a completely different social environment. He has forgotten that he cannot spare his child the experience of making his own mistakes: that no one learns by the mistakes of others is no less true for being familiar. Frequently I have talked with parents of students who wanted to leave college or who have got into some scrape. Invariably the cry is, "We tried to do the right thing and it didn't turn out!" To the parents the hurt is deep, for it seems that they have lost out on their second chance. The young adult is looking for the "right way" for himself.

#### **Reversing early lessons**

It is difficult for the parents of the young adult to "let go"—to accept the fact that he must make his own mistakes. When the children are small we urge independence. This is the aim of the nursery school, the school, the high school, in fact the philosophy of modern education. As they begin to grow, we urge them to do for themselves, to think for themselves, and especially not to depend on us to manage every small detail of their lives. We are, perhaps, even eager to be relieved of their continuing dependence. But when they become young adults, we reverse ourselves. We resent their independence of us, their seeming assumption that they can "go it alone." Their brave exterior may be only a false facade of assurance behind which they may still feel like the scared youngsters they really are. Nevertheless, parents feel suddenly let down, unneeded. They try to hold on to them, partly because they are

truly fearful for their young, confronted by a big, bad world, and partly, too, because the very growing up process leaves a void in the lives of the parents which they find difficult to fill. It is not just that there is an empty room in the house—it is that there is an empty space in the heart. The "silver cord" has to be cut again, and this time from the quivering spirit of both parents.

#### **Accepting compromise**

Parents must learn to accept compromise in their relationship with their children as they have learned to accept compromise in their day-to-day living. One does not give up one's ideals because they can only be partially fulfilled. One continues to strive for what one believes can be achieved. But the young adult grows up in an environment very different from that of his parents, and parents must face this realistically. The demands of society, the moral values and personal objectives are qualitatively different. The ideals of yesterday cannot be the ideals of today or tomorrow.

#### **CSAA publication news**

Members and friends of the Child Study Association of America will be interested to know that several of its recent publications are receiving special recognition through their promotion by the Mental Health Materials Center.

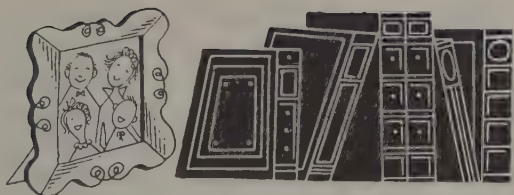
The Center is a non-profit organization established to act as a clearing house and distribution agency for publications in the fields of family life, mental health, human relations and education. One way in which it works is through a packet program subscribed to by 3500 professional workers in the fields of health, education, religion, social service.

Before choosing materials to be included in these packets, an Advisory Board screens carefully all the many new publications in the Center's areas of interest which are produced under the auspices of various U.S. agencies.

The Child Study Association publications which are now being promoted in this way are: *Facts of Life For Children*, *When Parents Get Together*, *The Controversial Problem of Discipline* and the current booklist *New Books About Parenthood and Family Life*.

The Mental Health Materials Center (1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.) will add other Child Study materials suitable for their purposes as they appear.





## Book reviews

### *Why Johnny Can't Read—And What You Can Do About It*

By Rudolf Flesch

New York: Harper & Bros., 1955; \$3.00.

Methodology is always controversial. As soon as one asks "What is the *best* way to do this job?" differences in values and thereby disagreements about ways to proceed are bound to emerge. In the education of American children, where learning how to read plays so important a part, methods of teaching reading have been given intensive attention. They have been experimented with, studied in research projects and frequently developed into logical sequences and systems for assuring children's successful accomplishments in the intricate task of getting meaning from printed symbols.

*Why Johnny Can't Read* is another foray into the field of educational methodology. In spite of the author's denials, it is really another attack on the schools. It seems also to be an advertisement for a way to cure the snake-bite of non-reading, and in this respect serves as a potent stimulant to one's nervous system.

Mr. Flesch's thesis in this book is a relatively simple one:

- (1) The job of teaching a child to read is "too important to be left to the educators";
- (2) Professional educators are almost solidly opposed to the home participating in the teaching of reading;
- (3) The current "word" system of teaching reading in the school is a failure;

(4) This failure is due to the fact that the schools do not teach phonics systematically;

(5) By following the instructions on pages 139 and 140 of *Why Johnny Can't Read*, and using the exercises in phonics on pages 147 through 222, the parent can be assured his child will achieve a fair degree of reading success.

Or, as the author states on page 32, "this method is *guaranteed*. A child who has been taught this way can read. Millions of children taught the other way can't."

Flesch's thesis has appeal for adults who are concerned because some children are not very good readers despite their regular attendance at school. If there is a sure way to children's success in reading, then, by all means, the home and the school should use it. But this line of thinking is predicated on the assumption that Flesch *does* have the sure way to reading success for all children—a way that is, of course, not original with him, but was in vogue thirty years ago. At that time, the systematic teaching of phonics did not achieve the results that the writer ascribes to the methods, which leads one to wonder if conditions are so changed that today's children are somehow better equipped for the mastery of reading through phonics than were the children of thirty-odd years ago.

One should also ask, before embarking on Flesch's phonics lessons, if he has been quite fair in the arguments leading to his conclusions. On page 60, Flesch says, of the "experts on reading," that "Their minds are filled with preconceived notions, they have an utter disregard for facts, and they are unwilling to learn anything." Such strong words tempt one to ask if Flesch is not also in the boat ascribed to the reading experts. Mr. Flesch has a marked tendency to toss off key generalizations without giving the sources of his evidence. For instance, on page 2 he says, "Do you know that there are no remedial reading cases in Germany, in France, in Italy, in Norway, in Spain—practically anywhere in the world except in the United States?" And, on the

same page, "Do you know that the teaching of reading never was a problem anywhere in the world until the United States switched to the present method around about 1925?" Where can the reader get the facts on which these rhetorical questions are based? On page 6, Flesch states flatly, "Our children don't read Andersen's *Fairy Tales* any more, or *The Arabian Nights* or Mark Twain or Louisa May Alcott or the Mary Poppins books or Dr. Doolittle books or *anything* interesting and worthwhile, *because they can't*." What is the source of this statement? On page 13, Flesch asserts, "If they had their way, our teachers would *never* tell the children that there are letters and that each letter represents a sound." What evidence can Flesch produce for this assertion?

"Always-never" and "either-or" thinking seldom helps one to arrive at truth. It frequently does have emotional appeal. *Why Johnny Can't Read* is an interesting study in how data may be presented and used for making generalizations and arriving at conclusions. It demonstrates well that there is far more to reading than pronouncing the words.

Nor can one resist wanting to ask Mr. Flesch some questions: Can it be that all children will ever learn to read by one series of exercises? How many hours of time with the individual child are needed to complete the exercises? Perhaps the same amount of time with any known method of teaching reading would pay the same dividends. With how many children has the method been used to test its validity? What really makes the authorities quoted as supporting systematic teaching of phonics better persons to believe than those authorities who do not support such a viewpoint? Do children's emotional problems have no bearing on their achievement in reading? Is pronouncing words synonymous with reading?

Some of Flesch's criticisms of current practices in teaching reading, and of current materials, have real point. But his conclusion that to adopt his system instead of

someone else's will right all wrongs does not ring true.

Teaching a child to read is surely more than applying a mechanical process of any sort, whether it be the word method, the sentence method, the A, B, C's, or phonics. A child reading is a child feeling and thinking — thinking thoughts, not just letter sounds.

LELAND B. JACOBS  
Professor of Education

Teachers College, Columbia University

# 20

*Health Supervision of Young Children: A Guide for Practicing Physicians and Child Health Conference Personnel*

Prepared by Nina Ridenour, and others  
New York: American Public Health Association, 1955; \$2.00.

Though this booklet is addressed to professionals, it has so many wise things to say about mothers and children and says them so simply, concisely and persuasively that parents should find it not only helpful but entertaining reading. In case the word "health" in the title may have misled you, it refers to emotional as well as physical well-being, with the emphasis, at least in terms of space, definitely on the former. From beginning to end, *Health Supervision of Young Children* is a succinct and convincing plea for a broader approach to the practice of pediatrics, for making the behavior patterns of a child and his family relationships as much the concern of his doctor as his weight gain and immunization record.

Naturally, the reader who is neither a practicing physician, nurse or trained health worker will probably not be interested in those portions of this guide which deal with the techniques of professionals—most of the Appendix, for example, and the second part of the booklet, which is concerned with how a well baby clinic (or "child health conference") can function to best advantage. Without these sections, however, there is still much fascinating



material for parents on topics such as: everyday problems of normal development; how mothers can be helped to see around the corner as their children grow and be prepared for what may come next month, or next year (anticipatory guidance is the new term for this); evaluating the emotional and physical health of children; recognizing and understanding the feelings of mothers; some of the less usual problems—physical, emotional and economic—that may arise in a home, and community resources for helping families to cope with them.

The writing throughout is of the highest quality—warm, lucid, ‘Spockian.’ To illustrate:

“All parents recognize the child’s first steps alone as a new developmental stage—quite literally ‘a step forward.’ They may also regard his first ‘Me do it’ in the same way. They are somehow less likely to look at the first ‘No! I won’t!’ in the same developmental light, and still less likely so to regard the first ‘Go away! I hate you,’ or, a little later, the first ‘You stink.’ And yet this is one of the important points of view doctors must get across: that social behavior has its developmental phases, too; that defiance of parents, for example, is not a flouting of the commandment to honor thy father and mother—it is *an aspect of growth*, just as literally as the first ‘da-da.’”

One caution to the lay reader seems to be in order. As in all child guidance material addressed to professionals, the assumption here is that recommended techniques will be carefully evaluated against a background of wide knowledge. The parent who finds these particular recommendations persuasive will do well to bear in mind that there is more than one good technique for almost every medical procedure and that one’s own doctor or clinic may quite justifiably prefer to do some things differently. Aside from this, the booklet falls into a rare category, a guide designed for the experts which can be used with equal profit by the layman.

MARY HOOVER  
for the Book Review Committee

## Prejudice and Your Child

By Kenneth B. Clark

Boston: Beacon Press, 1955; \$2.50

(To be published July 25th)

The awesome impact of racial prejudices upon American children is only now being assessed. In the volume *Prejudice and Your Child*, Dr. Clark has written in clear, hard-hitting language, a book which should be examined with care by American parents.

The author is the distinguished social psychologist who prepared the social science data for the brief presented to the Supreme Court. His findings were cited in the May 17, 1954 desegregation ruling.

This volume, prepared for parents, begins with a discussion of the importance we attach to our children, and our hope that they will go beyond where we have gone in the development of the American dream. Against this hope are placed the ugly facts relating to race relations. This first section sets the scene for later discussions by quoting the court’s statement:

“... to separate them (Negro children) from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone . . .”

With this backdrop, Dr. Clark asks: how do children learn about race? He examines the data which show that Negro children as young as three years old have racial awareness and that by seven, it is part of the knowledge of all Negro children. He indicates that white children have a comparable awareness at comparable ages. Religious identification, his material indicates, comes at a slightly later date.

The all-pervasiveness of these patterns is illustrated with data showing that the entire culture is integrated around such prejudices. Segregated living, television programs, comics, racial epithets, stereotypes of community leaders, such as teachers, and even the segregation of Negroes

by their white coreligionists, all combine to teach children *through their living* the pervasiveness of these prejudices.

What does this mean to a Negro child in our society? Dr. Clark shows five major impacts:

- 1) Conflicts between democratic ideals and enforced segregation;
- 2) Frustration for those who are the victims of prejudice;
- 3) Feelings of inferiority and not being wanted;
- 4) Feelings of submissiveness, martyrdom, aggressiveness, withdrawal tendencies, and conflicts about the individual's worth;
- 5) Distortion in the sense of what is real.

In the chapters on the effect on white children, he treats what is too often *not* examined; namely, what these ways of living do to white children. These he summarizes as psychological maladjustments, including increased hostility, deterioration of moral values, the hardening of social sensitivity, conflict between ideology and practices, the development of rationalizations. These and other techniques for protecting oneself may result in inner conflicts and guilt feelings which in turn produce disturbances in the individual's sense of reality and the relation of the individual to the world around him.

The concluding chapters deal with such practical questions as "What can schools do?", "What can social agencies do?", "What can churches do?" and "What can parents do?" The book concludes with an overall view of "American children and the future."

To this reviewer, the important contribution of the book is that it begins to raise for the majority group the question as to what prejudice does to its own children. Many years ago, Walter White remarked after a lynching that "the death of the Negro involved was not the greatest tragedy." The great tragedy was "the hardening of hearts and warping of perspective which white young people learn . . ."

When the history of this era is written, undoubtedly the great contribution of the Supreme Court decision will not be that it lifted the yoke from the minority group, as important as that may be, but rather that it took a significant step toward the elevation of all America to new levels of citizenship in which man accepts his fellow man without prejudice.

DAN W. DODSON, PH.D.

*Director, Center for Community and Field Services, New York University*

### **Psychotherapy and the Christian Message** By Albert Outler

*New York: Harper & Bros., 1954; \$3.50*

This book is a Christian theologian's plea for understanding between his fellow religionists and the psychotherapists whose world-view stems from the Age of Enlightenment and the biologic and natural sciences.

The reader of *Psychotherapy and the Christian Message* cannot be but impressed with the sincerity of Dr. Outler's effort and the fine scholarship he brings to his task. One also finds all too ample evidence of the difficulties of complete and simple communication even between men who are neighbors in space, partners in political conviction, equally concerned about man's quandary and equally devoted to solving the human problem.

There is no question but that the differing languages of religion and religions, on the one hand, and of the various psychiatric schools, on the other, put up a semantic barrier that is difficult to breach. It is essential, however, that men who share a profound wisdom about life and living somehow overcome the hazards that block truly rational thought; define and face their differences and, in doing so, help to clear the air of the confusion that exists today.

Dr. Outler is not only a highly competent theologian; he has subjected him-



self to a thorough study of Sigmund Freud and of the various schools of psychotherapy which have modified, or developed out of, the discoveries by this man of genius. Convinced though he is of the limitations of the idea that only in himself can man find the resolution of his dilemma, Dr. Outler pays repeated tribute to Freud's contribution to man's search for wholeness, for self-fulfillment. He makes equally clear to his fellow religionists what he believes are the errors in theological dogma and in organized religion which have increased the human plight.

Most preachers and rabbis, through their training, have had little preparation in the art of listening, and especially in avoiding dogmatic judgments about what they hear. Dr. Outler knows the harm that has been done by the minister who listens as a judge—harm to the communicant who needs to be freed from his feelings of guilt and anxiety; harm also to a full understanding of the Judaeo-Christian conception of a just, forgiving and all-loving God. He is aware, too, of the damage to true freedom that has resulted from the imposition of rigid moral codes and taboos by authority of this or that religious group.

In this connection, Dr. Outler quotes "an old back-country theologian" who was fond of saying, "Now, that doctrine of total depravity, rightly understood, is sound enough—it's just a denial of the claims of self-righteousness. But some folks have topped it with a doctrine of *tee*-total depravity—and that's heretical."

It is not only on this point, however, that Dr. Outler foots up the debt that religion owes to dynamic psychology and especially to the many areas in which its insights have illuminated ancient truths about human nature.

His sharpest challenge to psychotherapy (here defined as psychological medicine) might be expressed by two questions:

How can the psychotherapist, who would insist on scientific validation of all his other theories and practice, deny the existence of a transcendent Being, belief in

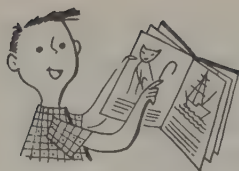
which, or whom, can be neither proved nor disproved? Is he not taking the leap of *non-faith*, just as the man who believes in God, whether he be Jew, Christian or Moslem, is taking the leap of faith?

A more evasive problem confronts us when we try to pin down the difference between a frankly religious and an avowedly non-religious psychotherapist or psychotherapy. Does the difference in religious belief make a real difference in therapeutic method and aim? Dr. Outler suggests that it does; not by any means because of doctrinal theory but because the non-theistic therapist may more easily be tempted to play the part of God to his patient than the one to whom God's place is too real to be preempted. If, according to Dr. Outler, the encounter between two persons is simply that between two human beings, it seems bound to differ from an encounter between two human persons and another to whom the name of God is given. Upon this fine point, however, this reviewer has only one comment: that Dr. Outler presents his case with great persuasiveness.

In discussing the problem of ethics, Dr. Outler expresses the view held by many theists that those who believe in man's complete mastery of his own destiny and environment are prone to accept one Utopia or another, only to become discouraged when this particular idealistic scheme of things fails to materialize. For reliance on man-made "progress," the theist does not substitute a God who manipulates and punishes, but rather one who grants man both freedom to choose and forgiveness if the choice proves wrong. God, to the believing Jew or Christian, gives to the believer a point of reference for ethical judgment beyond and above self-interest and purely mundane affairs.

Whether or not one would share all of Dr. Outler's convictions, we surely know that there is a need for all the wisdom of all the wise men if human life is to survive and flourish on this particular planet.

ELIZABETH BRADLEY  
CSAA Staff Member



## In the good old summertime

Whether your vacation plans include the mountains or the seashore, there are excellent books of fact and fiction to supplement your own and your children's experiences, or offer new fields to explore. Not to disparage the reading of books for sheer pleasure or escape, the following new titles are suggested to help make ordinary, routine holidays a time for rich living and learning. Again, the familiar plea: join in your children's reading and hobbies—not only for the real reward of sharing, but to insure your empathy and understanding when the refrigerator is loaded with test tubes, the cellar with guinea pigs and the window sills with crumbs for the birds.

### **The countryside**

THE POND BOOK. By Albro Gaul. Photos. Coward-McCann. \$2.75. (10 and over)

IN PONDS AND STREAMS. Written and illus. by Margaret Waring Buck. Abingdon. \$3. (10-14)

TREE FROG. By Paul McCutcheon Sears. Illus. by Barbara Latham. Holiday House. \$2. (7-9)

BUFO. *The Story of a Toad*. Written and illus. by Robert M. McClung. Morrow. \$2. (7-9)

SLIM GREEN. By Louise Dyer Harris and Norman Dyer Harris. Illus. by Robert Candy. Little, Brown. \$2. (5-7)

THE SWANS OF WILLOW POND. Written and illus. by Olive L. Earle. Morrow. \$2. (7-9)

THE TRUE BOOK OF INSECTS. By Ila Podendorf. Illus. by Chauncey Maltman. Childrens Press. \$2. (7-9)

INSECTS AND THE HOMES THEY BUILD. By Dorothy Sterling. Photos by Myron Ehrenberg. Doubleday. \$2.50. (11 and over)

ALL ABOUT THE INSECT WORLD. By Ferdinand C. Lane. Illus. by Matthew Kalmenoff. Random House. \$1.95. (9-12)

LULLABY OF EGGS. By Betty Bridgman. Illus. by Elizabeth Orton Jones. Macmillan. \$1.75. (4-9)

BIRDS AND THEIR WORLD. By Carroll Lane Fenton and Dorothy Constance Pallas. Illus. by Carroll Lane Fenton. John Day. \$2.75. (9-12)

BARN SWALLOW. By Paul McCutcheon Sears. Illus. by Walter Ferguson. Holiday House. \$2. (6-9)

Fields and streams abound in an infinite variety of material for nature study. The brimming water and its surrounding shores, teeming with plant and animal life, are described in *The Pond Book*. Its imaginative writing and vivid word pictures will surely stimulate even a tentative or latent interest. Covering the same subject, *In Ponds and Streams* will serve as a reference book to answer questions raised in the field. Here, well organized science and nature facts are supplemented with individual illustrations, drawn from actual models. Two life-cycle stories, about the familiar toad and the more elusive tree frog—*Bufo—The Story of a Toad*, and *Tree Frog*—are graphically detailed and illustrated. The young collector of things sundry will be tempted to acquire a tree frog pet.

In *The Swans of Willow Pond*, beautiful drawings do much to enhance the story of these stately long-necked birds and their habits. And for those of us who have superstitions and fears about bats and snakes,



two factual books will give our children a more accurate picture: *Bats*, full of illuminating information about the only flying mammal; and *Slim Green*, a pleasant tale of a harmless little snake and the numberless creatures who make up his environment in the meadow.

A miscellany of simple facts, with helpful illustrations, makes *The True Book of Insects* a good introduction to insect life. A book to return to time and again, *Insects and the Homes They Build* is a fascinating story of the home building and social insects. Unusually fine photographs are as explicit as the text. Another in the very fine "allabout" series is *All About the Insect World*, a well written, systematic treatment of the subject, ideally suited to the young reader.

The world of birds is presented in three books. For young children, a lovely poem with sensitive and imaginative pictures, *Lullaby for Eggs*, whispers softly of the artful places in which many birds place their eggs for safety. For the budding ornithologist, fascinating facts and good reading are to be found in *Birds and Their World*. *Barn Swallow* tells the life cycle of this harbinger of Spring from the first flight from the west to his own mating.

#### Stories about animals

AUNT SALLY'S FRIENDS IN FUR. By Thornton W. Burgess. Little, Brown. \$2.75. (12 and over)

LOONY COON: *Antics of a Rollicking Raccoon*. By Sam Campbell. Illus. by Alexander Kay. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.50. (9-11)

DANIEL 'COON. Written and illus. by Phoebe Erickson. Knopf. \$3. (8-11)

YIPE. By David Malcomson. Pictures by Morgan Dennis. Little, Brown. \$2.75. (8-11)

HURRY, SKURRY, & FLURRY. By Mary Buff and Conrad Buff. Illus. by Conrad Buff. Viking. \$2.75. (5-7)

Real animals in their natural surroundings make for good reading anytime. Raccoons seem to be in style this year. *Aunt Sally's Friends* is the true story of a "night club" for small animals, run by an elderly lady on Cape Cod. Thornton Burgess

writes realistically for older children, with excellent photographs. *Loony Coon* is another in the series about the Campbells at their summer camp in a Wisconsin sanctuary. This time a young friend shares in their nature observation and wildlife adventure. The taming of a mischievous raccoon, a boy's protest against the cruelty of trapping and a dash of mystery make *Daniel 'Coon* a charming "pet" story. (If all these stories have whetted your appetite for an unusual pet, look at *Raccoon Family Pets*, discussed under "Things to Do.")

*Yipe* was not always a farm dog. How she comes from the city and joins a kindly family makes an engaging tale for the seven- to nine-year-old. The story of three squirrels, *Hurry, Skurry & Flurry*, captures in blank verse and beautiful illustrations the mystery, the terror and the loveliness of the forest.

#### Skies, beach and desert

THE BIG BOOK OF STARS. By Leon A. Hausman. Pictures by Jack Coggins. Grosset & Dunlap. \$1. (7-9)

FIND THE CONSTELLATIONS. Written and illus. by H. A. Rey. Houghton Mifflin. \$3. (8-12)

I PLAY AT THE BEACH. By Dorothy Koch. Pictures by Feodor Rojankovsky. Holiday House. \$2.50. (4-7)

THE WONDER WORLD OF THE SEASHORE. Written and illus. by Marie Neurath. Lothrop. \$1.75. (7-9)

WALT DISNEY'S LIVING DESERT. By Jane Werner & staff of Disney Studio. Simon & Schuster. \$2.95. (10 and over)

The child who is just becoming interested in astronomy will find the basic facts about the Earth and other planets in *The Big Book of Stars*. For the star-gazer who is serious about learning his way around the Zodiac, *Find the Constellations* is an inviting approach to the subject. Actual outlines drawn around the groups of stars which the ancients identified with animals and mythological persons make them clear, and with a little imagination will pay dividends in fun and knowledge about our galaxy.



*I Play at the Beach* gives the feeling of sunlight, sand and water in a bright picture book. Excursions to the beach will take on new interest through *The Wonder World of the Seashore* which contains many curious facts about creatures found along the sands. Effectively illustrated in color. One of the year's outstanding contributions to our nature literature is *Walt Disney's Living Desert* (first of a projected series). All of the grim struggle for survival and tense drama of the desert, its creatures and its extraordinary design, are reproduced in a running text that accompanies beautiful color photographs from the documentary film.

#### Forests and trees

LOOKOUT FOR THE FOREST. *A Conservation Story*. By Glenn O. Blough. Illus. by Jeanne Bendick. Whittlesey House. \$2.25. (7-9)

THE FRIENDLY FORESTS. By Alma Chestnut Moore. Illus. by Matthew Kalmenoff. \$2.50. (12 and over)

WHAT TREE IS IT? Written and illus. by Anna Pistorius. Follet. \$1.50. (8-12)

Forestry has a fascination for young and old. *Lookout for the Forest* is a story for the junior ranger whose enthusiasm may outstrip his reading ability, while *The Friendly Forest* introduces the young teenager to the wealth and history of our timberlands.

Extremely well integrated text and illustrations distinguish *What Tree Is It?*, a handbook for tree identification, in the form of a guessing game. Its fund of odd facts would add to the fun and interest of a long motor trip.

#### Museums and zoos

PAWS, HOOFS, AND FLIPPERS. Written and illus. by Olive L. Earle. Morrow. \$3.50. (12 and over)

ZOO EXPEDITIONS. Written and illus. by William Bridges. Morrow. \$3.50. (12 and over)

INTRODUCING ANIMALS - WITH - BACK - BONES. By William Bullough and Helena Bullough. Illus. by William Bullough. Crowell. \$2.50. (12 and over)

ANIMALS IN ARMOR. By Clarence J. Hylander. Illus. with photographs. Macmillan. \$3.50. (12 and over)

DINOSAURS. By Marie Halun Bloch. Illus. by George F. Mason. Coward-McCann. \$2.50. (7-9)

HOW THE ANIMALS EAT. By Millicent Selsam. Illus. by Helen Ludwig. Young Scott. \$2.50. (6-8)

THE WONDER WORLD OF LONG AGO. Written and illus. by Marie Neurath. Lothrop \$1.75. (6-10)

Exotic and extinct animals excite the curiosity of many youngsters. One would *not* be likely to encounter the creatures in this group of books on the usual, or run-of-the-summer vacation, except in museums or zoos. The first three will be entertaining reading for all those with a zoological leaning, from the twelve-year-old to Grandpa. *Paws, Hoofs, and Flippers* is a fine discussion of mammals, classified according to the structure of their feet. We can all feel the thrill of "bringing them back alive" in *Zoo Expeditions*. *Introducing Animals-with-Backbones* is a scholarly book on the vertebrates with many interesting facts and detailed illustrations.

*Animals in Armor* is a special book for the older child interested in reptiles. Younger readers will discover, in *How the Animals Eat*, an intimate view of this always attractive occupation. For those interested in prehistoric times and creatures, *Dinosaurs* and *The Wonder World of Long Ago* are excellent introductory, easy-to-read books.

#### How things grow

THE FLOWER. By Marie Louise Downer. Illus. by Lucienne Bloch. Young Scott. \$1.75. (5-7)

WHAT'S INSIDE? By May Garelick. Photos by Rena Jakobsen. Scott. \$2. (5-7)

PETER PLANTS A POCKETFUL. Written and illus. by Aaron Fine. Oxford. \$2.50. (5-7)

The facts of life, botanical and zoological, for the very youngest. *The Flower* explains the germination of a seed, with brief text and bright poster-like pictures. A baby goose pecks his way out of the egg in the



lovely photographs illustrating *What's Inside?* Either volume should answer a great number of five-year-old questions without becoming too involved.

Proving that you can't keep a good seed down, *Peter Plants a Pocketful* is the tale of a sunflower that breaks its way through the cement flooring of a playground.

**Things to do—in summer, or anytime**

THE TRUE BOOK OF TOOLS FOR BUILDING. By Jerome E. Leavitt. Illus. by Bill Armstrong. Childrens Press. \$2. (6-8)

THE WORKSHOP BOOK FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN. By Martha Lincoln and Katherine Torrey. Photos by Pierce Parmain. Houghton Mifflin. \$5. (all ages)

FUN WITH YOUR CAMERA. By Mae Freeman and Ira Freeman. Random. \$1.50. (9-12)

CHICKENS AND HOW TO RAISE THEM. Written and illus. by Louis Darling. Morrow. \$2. (10 and over)

THE CARE OF WATER PETS. By Gertrude Pels. Illus. by Ana Morgan. Crowell. \$2.50. (10 and over)

RACCOON FAMILY PETS. By Leonore Brandt. Illus. by Douglas Tibbits. All-Pets Books. \$1.25. (10 and over)

FUN WITH SKITS, STUNTS, AND STORIES. By Helen Eisenberg and Larry Eisenberg. Association Press. \$3. (9-12)

MAGIC FOR BOYS. By G. S. Ripley. Association Press. \$3. (10 and over)

GOLF FOR BOYS AND GIRLS. By Chick Evans. Illus. by Frank C. Murphy and Don Honick. Windsor Press. \$3.50. (9 and over)

THE STORY OF THE KITE. By Harry Edward Neal. Illus. by Jack Momen. Vanguard. \$2.75. (10-14)

The young carpenter will profit from *The True Book of Tools for Building*. Many a sad mistake or squashed thumb can be avoided by following the simple and sensible directions incorporated in the descriptions of the various tools. A serious manual of shop activity for family or group participation, *The Workshop Book for Parents and Children*, is drawn from the experience of two teachers who have achieved great success in this field. Creating with the hands is an invaluable part of every child's development and the instructions start at the youngest level and cover both the free expression and precision skills.

The clear text and photographs of *Fun with Your Camera* will help a beginner understand the theory, technique and art of photography as a hobby. What to buy and where to buy it, from the baby chicks to the nails for the chicken house, are explained in *Chickens and How to Raise Them*. *The Care of Water Pets* will fire the enthusiasm of the beginner and add to the knowledge of the veteran ichthyologist. A delightful piece of book-making, it is sure to inspire an interest in aquariums and their inhabitants.

Boys, it would appear, nowadays yearn for a raccoon. A slight, but complete handbook, *Raccoon Family Pets*, by a former curator of the Cincinnati Children's Zoo, tells how to raise, train and doctor these intelligent creatures. A warning—not all states allow them to be held in captivity.

Group entertainment problems are solved in good natured and hilarious fashion in *Fun with Skits, Stunts, and Stories*. A child at camp might welcome this amusing volume and enjoy the silly jokes and nonsensical stories that are even funnier when read aloud. A comprehensive manual, *Magic for Boys*, by a practicing magician who knows all the tricks of the trade and reveals them, will be a boon to the entertainer, whether professional or amateur. *Golf for Boys and Girls* is a chatty volume by an old-timer in the game, advocating his own unorthodox grip, and including etiquette and caddy instruction. *The Story of the Kite*, with excellent diagrams and directions for the classic pastime of making and flying kites, relates its dramatic history to the progress of civilization.

FRANCES LEBER

VIRGINIA OWENS

for the Children's Book Committee

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The books listed herein are selected by our Children's Book Committee as part of its continuous evaluation of books for children. Our policy, however, is to keep the advertising columns open to responsible publishers whether or not titles advertised appear on the Association's lists or in its articles.





## Children's book award

Two books were selected for the eleventh Annual Children's Book Award of the Child Study Association of America, which is given for "a book for young people which deals realistically with vital problems in their contemporary world." The scrolls of award were presented at the Association's Annual Conference Luncheon on March 28th.

"The two books are miles apart in subject matter, yet each in its own way illuminates a slice of real life as it affects young people," said Mrs. Hugh Grant Straus, Chairman of the Association's Children's Book Committee, which made the selection.

"In *The Ordeal of the Young Hunter*, by Jonreed Lauritzen (Little, Brown; 1954), it is the valorous struggle of a Navajo boy and his family to maintain their fine heritage of courage and integrity in the face of the encroachment of the white man's ways and demands.

"*High Road Home*, by William Corbin (Coward-McCann; 1954) presents the plight of an orphaned French boy who, embittered by war's desolations, driven by his own deep emotions and searching fruitlessly for solace, treads a rough road to acceptance of this strange and baffling America."



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TODDLER'S TOIDEY Base and Pan, a complete unit.



## Paper on Counseling

A *Project in Preventive Mental Health for Parents of Young Children*, a paper by Mrs. Dorothea McClure and Dr. Harvey Schrier of the CSAA Counseling Staff, was presented at the recent Annual Conference of the American Orthopsychiatric Association in Chicago.

## CSAA participates in nursing training

Two CSAA staff members will be participating in the course *Growth and Development* at the 1955 Summer Session of Adelphi College School of Nursing. Dr. Gunnar Dybwad, Executive Director, will lecture on "The Child in the Home and the Community." Miss Gertrude Goller, Associate, Leadership Training and Parent Group Programs, will serve as seminar leader and lecturer on child development for the course.

## New CSAA board members

CSAA is pleased to welcome two new members to its Board of Directors: Mr. Whitman Knapp, Attorney at Law, and partner in the New York City law firm of Hatch, Root, Barrett, Cohen & Knapp; and Mr. Nathaniel T. Winthrop, who is associated with the law firm of Shearman, Sterling & Wright, also in New York City. Both have been interested in the agency's program for some time, and Mr. Knapp is presently serving as Chairman of the CSAA Committee on Desegregation.

## Mental Health Board appointments

Mr. Frank E. Karelsen, Vice-President and Treasurer of CSAA, has been appointed to the newly formed New York City Community Mental Health Board. Dr. Paul Lemkau, noted authority in the fields of public health and mental hygiene, has been appointed Executive Director of the Board.

## Conference on Youth

Miss Josette Frank, Educational Associate of the CSAA, spoke at the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation *Conference on Youth*, held recently in Washington, D. C. Miss Frank was one of a panel of discussants on the topic "The Mass Media: Schools of Youth."